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A COMPEND

OF

BIBLE TRUTH.



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# CONTENTS.

	<i>Page.</i>
CHAPTER I.	
Being of God.....	1
CHAPTER II.	
The Holy Scriptures.....	8
CHAPTER III.	
Creation .....	20
CHAPTER IV.	
Providence of God.....	26
CHAPTER V.	
Man's Primeval State.....	34
CHAPTER VI.	
Fall of Man.....	42
CHAPTER VII.	
Covenant of Grace.....	53
CHAPTER VIII.	
Incarnation.....	66
CHAPTER IX.	
Atonement.....	74
CHAPTER X.	
Resurrection and Ascension of Christ....	84
CHAPTER XI.	
Offices of Christ.....	89

	<i>Page.</i>
CHAPTER XII.	
Justification . . . . .	96
CHAPTER XIII.	
Regeneration and Conversion . . . . .	109
CHAPTER XIV.	
Repentance and Faith . . . . .	117
CHAPTER XV.	
Sanctification . . . . .	121
CHAPTER XVI.	
Good Works . . . . .	131
CHAPTER XVII.	
The Sacraments . . . . .	142
CHAPTER XVIII.	
Baptism . . . . .	148
CHAPTER XIX.	
The Lord's Supper . . . . .	153
CHAPTER XX.	
Death . . . . .	160
CHAPTER XXI.	
Resurrection . . . . .	165
CHAPTER XXII.	
Judgment . . . . .	168
CHAPTER XXIII.	
Heaven . . . . .	173
CHAPTER XXIV.	
Hell . . . . .	180

# COMPEND OF BIBLE TRUTH.



## CHAPTER I.

### BEING OF GOD.

OF all conceptions of the human mind, the idea of God is the most sublime. It is not only sublime, but awful. Every thing else appears diminutive while the mind is occupied with this thought. Though the idea of an eternal and infinite being is too great for the grasp of the human intellect, yet it is suited to the human mind. It fills it, and produces a feeling of reverence, which is felt to be a right emotion. If there is no such being, this is the grandest illusion which ever possessed the imagination of man.

If it be an error, then error is preferable to truth; for on this supposition, truth in its whole compass has nothing, in grandeur, to compare with illusion. Remove this idea and the mind is confounded with an infinite blank. Deprived of this, the intellect has no object to fill it: it is confounded and distressed with the retrospect of the past, and prospect of the future. But it cannot be, that this noblest of all conceptions of the human mind should be false: the capacity of the soul of man to form such a conception is a proof of the existence of a great and good and intelligent First Cause.

God has not left himself without a witness of his being and his perfections. It may well be doubted whether the evidence of a divine existence, the author of all things, could be clearer and stronger than it is. A display of exquisite skill in every organized body around us is far better evidence than any extraordinary appearance, however glorious, or the ut-

tering of any voice, however tremendous. Such miraculous phenomena would indeed powerfully excite and astonish the mind, and would be a certain proof of the existence of a superior being; but would, in reality, add nothing to the force of the evidence which we already possess, in the innumerable curiously and wisely organized animal bodies by which we are surrounded. And if we were confined to the examination of our own constitution of mind and body, the innumerable instances of manifest wisdom in the contrivance of the several parts, their exact adaptation to one another, and their wonderful correspondence with the elements of the external world without us; if any man surveys the structure of the human body, its bones and joints, its blood vessels and muscles, its heart and stomach, its nerves and glands, and all these parts put into harmonious action by a vital power, the source of which is not understood—if he surveys the adap-

tation of light to the eye, of air to the ear and to the lungs, and of food to the stomachs of different animals, and notices the exact correspondence between the appetites of animals and the power of their stomachs to digest that food and that only which is craved by their appetites respectively, and considers what wonderful provision has been made for the preservation and defence of every species; how much wisdom in their covering, instruments of motion and defence; in the propagation of their respective species, and the nourishment of their young—I say, if any man's mind is so constructed as to see all these things, and yet remain sceptical respecting the existence of an intelligent cause, the conclusion must be that such a mind is destitute of reason, or has not the capacity of discerning evidence and feeling its force.

In prosecuting the argument from the evident appearance of wisdom in the

structure of animal and vegetable bodies it is not necessary to multiply these cumulative proofs; for as one watch, or one telescope would prove the existence of a skilful artist, so the careful examination of a few specimens of animal or vegetable organization will satisfy the mind, as well as the minute survey of thousands of similar organizations. The attempts of ingenious and scientific men to account for these appearances, so evidently indicative of design, without the supposition of an intelligent Creator, are so replete with folly, that we cannot but think such men abandoned of God to believe a lie, because they liked not to retain the knowledge of God in their thoughts; so that it is still true, that it is the fool who hath said in heart, "there is no God."

If all other arguments for the being of God were wanting, the truth might be inferred with strong probability from our

moral feelings. Every man feels himself bound by a moral law; he cannot but see the difference between right and wrong in many actions. The former he feels to be obligatory to be done, the latter not. Whence this binding internal law, so deeply engraven on the heart of every man, that he cannot escape from the feeling of its obligation? Does it not clearly intimate that there is a Lawgiver who has provided a witness of his right in every bosom? Where there is a moral law there must be a moral governor. As long as conscience exists in the breasts of men, atheism cannot prevail long. In the tumult of the passions, in the glare of false reasonings, God may for a while be forgotten and his very being denied; but, ere long, these moral feelings will bring men back to the acknowledgment of their Creator. There is good reason to think that the preservation of some religion among all nations is more owing



to their moral constitution than to any reasoning on the subject. We need not fear, therefore, that atheism will ever prevail very generally, or continue long.

## CHAPTER II.

## THE HOLY SCRIPTURES.

THE Bible is made up of many books written through a period of more than fifteen hundred years, by men who professed to have received their doctrines from God, and to have committed them to writing by his direction. These Scriptures then, must contain a revelation from God, or be a vile imposture. On the latter supposition it is marvellous, that the same purpose of deception should be kept for so long a period by a succession of impostors, all agreeing in the same sentiments, and that the cheat should never have been discovered.

Again, when we examine the moral character and tendency of these books, it is unaccountable that, throughout, they

should inculcate a sublimer theology and purer morality than any other books in the world; that they should condemn every species of vice, and especially, that they should severely reprobate all falsehood, deceit, and fraud; thus in almost every page writing their own condemnation. As it cannot be explained what could have made wicked impostors wish to inculcate such doctrines; so it is contrary to all experience, that men of habitually corrupt minds should be able to conceive or write discourses of so much moral purity and surpassing excellence. Read the sermons of Christ. Peruse the epistles of the apostles, and try to believe that these discourses proceeded from men steeped in corrupt principles and fraud. We are ready at once to say—impossible. When we see light, we know that it must have proceeded from a luminous body. When we see wisdom in creation, we know that there exists a being of incomparable wisdom; and when

we read a book of extraordinary power of argument, or replete with sublime imagery, we are sure that such works are the product of gifted minds. What shall we think then, when we behold in the Scriptures moral excellence shining forth in the purest and most comprehensive precepts, and embodied in bright examples of consistent piety and virtue? The character of Jesus Christ, as portrayed by the evangelists, is itself a moral phenomenon, which cannot be accounted for on any other supposition than that the writers were inspired. It is easy in words to ascribe exalted virtues to a hero, and to exaggerate his excellences by heaping up pompous epithets; but to describe a character of perfect virtue by merely relating what he said and did, and to place him often in circumstances where it is not only difficult to do right, but when an extraordinary wisdom is requisite to determine what is right, is not easy. But in this way has the charac-

ter of Jesus Christ been delineated by the evangelists, without one word of eulogy. And let it be remarked, that they were unlearned men, who had enjoyed none of the advantages of a liberal education. Let any number of common, uneducated men undertake to write a history of some eminent person, and what would be the result, even if their intentions were honest? No honest inquirer can read the Pentateuch, and fail to rise from the perusal, astonished at the wisdom, the majesty, the purity, and the simplicity of the composition. Is it possible then that the five books of Moses are a base forgery? Could an impostor have persuaded a whole nation to adopt a burdensome and expensive code of laws, if he had not been able to give undoubted evidence of his divine mission? And could he have so deluded a whole nation as to induce them to believe that they saw the miraculous judgments of God poured out on the Egyptians, that they saw the sea

divided at the word of Moses, that they actually marched through an arm of the sea as on dry land, and that they had been fed with manna, rained from the clouds for forty years, and had seen the water gushing from the dry rock, upon the touch of the wonder working-rod, if no such events had ever occurred? The history of these miracles is so interwoven with the common events, and with the religious institutions of the Jews, that they cannot be separated.

Let the sceptic tell us what motive could have induced any wicked impostor to write the book of Psalms? Here we have, not merely sublime poetic imagery, but a spirit of fervent elevated devotion, to which there is no parallel in all the heathen writings. He must have been a strange impostor, that could compose such songs, or could have felt any pleasure in such elevated, spiritual exercises. Can the deist now produce any com-

positions which will bear a comparison with these ?

Again, read the book of Proverbs. Do you see any marks of imposture here ? Do we not find concentrated here more useful maxims of prudence and political economy, and more excellent moral precepts than can be gathered from all the sages of the pagan world ?

But, it may be alleged, that men differ in their tastes respecting the internal excellence of literary compositions ; and that in a matter of so great importance we ought to possess some more decisive evidence of divine inspiration. Well, what will be considered sufficient evidence that God has made to men a revelation of his will ? Will it be satisfactory, if they who profess to be inspired are enabled to do works which are far above the power of man, and which require the Almighty power of God ? No one will doubt that if God give his attestation to any declaration, it should be received as

true, for "He is not a man that he should lie." If then, the apostles actually wrought miracles in the name of Jesus, and in confirmation of their doctrine, it cannot be denied that they were inspired. That such miracles were actually wrought openly and in the presence of watchful and bitter enemies is a matter of record. The four evangelists have testified in the gospels, that Christ gave sight to the blind, hearing to the deaf, health to the sick, sound limbs to the cripple, and that in several instances, before a multitude of people, he raised the dead. They testify, that after his crucifixion he rose from the dead; and that forty days after his crucifixion he sent down, as he had promised, the Holy Spirit on the apostles, bestowing upon them and others various miraculous gifts, which Paul publicly testifies were common in the churches. The truth of Christianity then rests on this single point, Is the testimony of these miracles true, or a mere fable?



That the gospels were written near the time when these things were done is capable of the fullest proof. Indeed, had not these facts been credited fully by the first disciples, they never would have submitted to such sacrifices, and exposed themselves to such dangers. All earthly considerations weighed heavily on the other side. Every convert to Christianity is, therefore, a witness of the truth of these miracles; for they had every motive to examine into the truth, and the facts were of such a nature that they could not have been deceived.

It does indeed require strong evidence to satisfy the mind that there has been a departure from the common course of nature; but testimony may be so strong that it would be unreasonable to doubt of the miracles which it is brought to attest. It is admitted that there have often been false witnesses, and that we may be deceived by trusting to insufficient testimony; but, we know, also, that in many

cases our faith in testimony is as strong as in those things which have passed before our eyes. The point of examination then is, whether it is more probable that the testimony is false, or that a miracle has been wrought. If many persons, without any motive to deceive, and without previous concert, agree and stand to it in the midst of threatenings and sufferings, that they have witnessed miracles, it would be folly to disbelieve. And, especially, if such events followed in such immediate and continued succession as can only be accounted for by supposing the miracles to have been performed, the evidence may arise to such a degree of certainty as to assure us that we are not deceived. Now, the conversion of the civilized world to Christianity can never be accounted for on any supposition but the truth of the miracles and supernatural influence accompanying the gospel. And the whole train of succeeding events

goes to corroborate the truth of the evangelical history.

Another incontrovertible evidence of the truth of Christianity is the salutary effects which it has produced in the world. The conversion and reformation of sinners has been a standing proof of the divine origin of the Bible; and this evidence is not confined to ancient days. Blessed be God, clear and striking instances of the reformation of wicked men have occurred under our own observation. And the gospel has produced in our own times such a remarkable change in the moral and civil condition of some of the most ignorant, degraded, and vicious tribes of heathen, that if there were no other evidence of its truth this would go far to satisfy an honest mind. Can any reasonable man believe that preaching a cunningly devised fable would turn men from their sins, to which they had been long habituated?

Hundreds and thousands, also, in Christian lands can testify that the truth of God has produced a powerful and salutary effect on their own minds, convincing them of their sin and danger, and exciting in them trust in Christ, which has enkindled their love, and brought sweet peace into their troubled breasts. And we see, continually, the power of the gospel to afford consolation in affliction and to buoy up the soul with assured hope even in the hour of death.

But, if all the convincing proofs, above mentioned, were wanting, the undeniable prophecies which have been literally fulfilled, are a clear demonstration of a divine revelation; for who can predict distant future events but God alone? The prophecies relate to the fortunes of the Jewish people—to the destiny of many great and proud cities and nations; but the most important predictions of the Old Testament relate to the Messiah,

which were literally fulfilled in Jesus of Nazareth. Yet no prophecy of Scripture is more striking and convincing than that of Christ respecting the destruction of Jerusalem, and the ruin and dispersion of the Jews.

## CHAPTER III.

## CREATION.

THE first information which the Bible gives us, is of the creation of all things out of nothing in the space of six days. No other book gives any satisfactory account of the creation of the world, or of the origin of the human race. The Bible does not profess to inform us when the substance of the heavens and the earth, was created ; but it assures us that it had a beginning, and that God was its creator. When the time arrived for the creation of man upon the earth, the confused and shapeless mass which was covered with darkness, under the forming and creative agency of the Almighty, began to assume a new appearance. And the effects produced were not wrought in-

stantly, but day after day, for six consecutive days. On the first day, light was created, for God said "Let there be light, and there was light." On the second day, God formed the firmament or atmosphere, which separated between the water in the seas, and that held suspended in the clouds, or invisibly in the air. On the third day, the waters were collected into the basin prepared for them, and were separated from the earth or dry land, which now became visible; and on this day, also, the earth was planted with every kind of herb yielding seed, and tree yielding fruit after their kinds respectively, with the power of propagating their species. On the fourth day, the luminaries of heaven were formed, or then began to shine upon the earth; the sun to rule the day, and the moon to rule the night; and also the stars. If it be asked how light could exist and form the day, before the creation of the sun, it must be acknowledged that our knowledge of the elements

of matter is very indistinct and imperfect. The question proceeds on the supposition that light is a substance which comes out of the sun by emanation ; but it is much more reasonable to believe, that light is nothing more than a certain condition of a widely diffused fluid, which when excited produces in us the sense of sight ; just as another fluid when agitated, by its undulations produces in us the sense of hearing. On this subject we assert nothing ; but if the theory mentioned will remove the difficulty, it is a proper answer to the question. But even if the sun were a body of light, the substance of light might have been created before it was conglomerated into one great body. On the fifth day the water and air were replenished with living inhabitants, with constitutions, instincts, and senses, exactly suited to the element in which they were placed. On the sixth day, the earth was stocked with beasts and reptiles of every species.



And, finally, a council was, as it were, called in heaven, when the crowning work of creation was about to be produced; that is, the adorable Trinity deliberated, speaking after the manner of man, "And God said, Let us make man in our image, and after our likeness, and let them have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over the cattle, and over all the earth, and over every thing that creepeth on the earth."

As God is a spirit, and has no bodily parts, what is here said of his "image and likeness" must relate to his spiritual and moral nature. As man was created an immortal, intelligent spirit, in this respect he bears a resemblance to his Creator; but we have stronger evidence for referring these words to the moral image of God. For the apostle Paul, when speaking of the renewal of man in the image of God, makes it to consist in "righteousness and true holiness," (Eph.

iv. 24.) And, in another place, he makes this image to consist in “knowledge:” “And have put on the new man which is renewed in knowledge, after the image of Him that created him,” in which last words there is a plain reference to the history of man’s creation in Genesis.

But, as it was not judged to be good that man should be alone, his Creator, in great kindness, formed for him a suitable companion, a woman taken from his own side, a help meet for him, and the mother of all living. To the man was given the name, Adam, the import of which is “red,” and to the woman the name Eve, which signifies “living.”

God pronounced all that he had created “good,” “very good.” Nothing imperfect ever came from the hands of God. All creatures were not made equal; and in respect to constitution some are more perfect than others; but every thing is perfect in its kind. In creation, as far as it is subjected to our view, there is a

beautiful gradation of creatures from the most exalted angel down to the minutest atom; and among animated creatures there is a scale of perfection, according to which one living creature rises above another by almost insensible degrees. And among the creatures there is observable a mutual dependence of one upon another; and in the whole there is an astonishing harmony; or if there should be the appearance of disorder and confusion in some things, it must be attributed to our ignorance; for as far as we can understand the works of God, every thing seems to be in its proper place, and governed by laws adapted to its nature.

## CHAPTER IV.

## PROVIDENCE OF GOD.

“THE providence of God is his most holy, wise, and powerful preserving and governing all his creatures and all their actions.”

All creatures are necessarily dependent on the Creator for their continued existence. If he should withdraw his supporting hand, they would cease to be. If we admit that God in wisdom made the world, he had some end in view in the works which, by his power, he produced: it is most certain, therefore, that he will so direct and govern his creatures that the end designed shall be accomplished. Being perfect in wisdom and power, he is able to order all events,

and the actions of all creatures, in such a manner as to attain the end, which he purposed to himself in the beginning. To suppose that his purpose failed of its accomplishment, or that the actual state of things in the universe, is different from the original plan of the Creator, would be attended with so many absurd consequences, that the idea should not for a moment be admitted. Such an opinion would detract essentially from the wisdom or power of the Creator, and would destroy all confidence in him as the Governor of the world; for if disconcerted and disappointed in the execution of his plan, in one instance, there can be no security that the same will not happen again and again, until every thing shall fall into disorder; and that the end proposed to himself by the Creator, will be for ever frustrated. The only reason which has induced any to entertain the opinion that the plan of the Almighty has been disconcerted, is the introduction of

sin into the world by the actions of free agents. It has been assumed as a principle, that God is not only not the author of sin, which is true, but that, consistently with his holiness, he could not form a purpose, that it should be permitted to exist. Though the motive which has led many to maintain that sin has come into the world in opposition to the purpose of God is good, yet the opinion is utterly untenable, in consistence with the perfections of Jehovah. It would make it necessary to believe, not only that he did not design that evil should exist, but that he did not foresee the event; for if he had foreseen it, he could have prevented it, if in no other way, yet by omitting to bring into existence a creature capable of frustrating his plan; or by producing a creature who, he foreknew, would not transgress. We must believe, therefore, that the purposes of God cannot fail of their accomplishment, and hence, that he not only foresaw,

but determined to suffer his creatures, in the exercise of their freedom, to commit sin. Yet this permission does not imply that he was the author of sin, or that he can look upon it with the least favour or approbation; for sin is ever that abominable thing which God hates. But he permitted free agents to commit sin; that is, he did not interpose to hinder them from acting as they pleased, because he knew that he could make the existence of sin and misery, the occasion of more illustriously displaying his attributes, particularly his justice and his mercy, than could have been done in other circumstances. The reason then why sin was permitted to exist was, that God might have an opportunity of manifesting his own glory to all intelligent creatures more conspicuously; which is the great end of all his works and dispensations. The providence of God in regard to sin consists, first, in his purpose to permit free agents, in the exercise of

their freedom, to commit sin ; secondly, in so directing and governing sinful creatures, that their actions may be made subservient to his own wise purposes ; and when they would not have this tendency they are restrained, according to that declaration in the Psalms, “ He maketh the wrath of man to praise him, and the remainder of wrath he restraineth.” The Holy Scriptures constantly represent the providence of God as concerned in the evil actions of men, not as causing or approving them, but as permitting, governing, and directing them, so that they may promote his own glory. Thus, the envy of Joseph’s brethren, which led them to sell him as a slave, was overruled to be the occasion of preserving the whole family from death. The crucifixion of our Lord was by the hands of wicked men, in the free indulgence of their own malice, but it was nevertheless, “ by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God.” And the same is true of all



sinful actions ; they are hateful to God, considered in their own nature, and yet his providence is concerned in their permission, and direction, so as to promote a good end. The providence of God, therefore, in its relation to the sins of men, is most holy and wise, and does not interfere in the least with man's free agency. "He worketh all things according to the counsel of his own will:" and his "counsel it shall stand." "Is there evil in the city, and I have not done it?"

The providence of God extends to all events, great and small. Both reason and revelation teach this doctrine. For if God governs the world at all, his providence must extend to small things as well as to great, because of the concatenation of events, according to which the great often depend for their existence on the small. And if reason were silent, the Scriptures speak out clearly on this point. "The lot is cast into the lap, but

the whole disposal thereof is of the Lord.”  
“Are not two sparrows sold for a farthing, and one of them shall not fall to the ground without your Father.”  
“For the very hairs of your head are all numbered.”

The doctrine of a particular superintending providence, as it is a most reasonable, so is a most comfortable truth. If any thing could occur without being included in the plan of the divine government, we never could feel that we were safe. The sure ground of our trust in God is, “that He works all things according to the counsel of his own will.” When the dark and cloudy day of adversity comes, and billow after billow rolls over us, and threatens to overwhelm us, our consolation is that our God rideth on the whirlwind and directeth the storm. We may often think with Jacob, “that all these things are against us;” but when we can view every event, however afflictive, as the appointment of our hea-

venly Father, we can say with Eli, "It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good." It is a delightful thought to the true Christian, that all events are under the government of Divine Providence. The book of providence, the leaves of which are successively unfolded day after day, should be carefully studied, and its indications faithfully used in directing us in the path of duty.

## CHAPTER V.

## MAN'S PRIMEVAL STATE.

As man was created a free, moral agent, it is not only true that he was capable of being governed by a moral law, but such a law resulted necessarily from his relation to his Creator. It was his duty as it was his delight to exercise love and every holy affection toward that Being who possessed every perfection. Although man was perfect in holiness, being created in the image of God, yet he was mutable, as being a creature ; for immutability properly belongs to God only. All accountable creatures are, therefore, from their very condition, in a state of probation, that is, they are made subject

to a law which they are required to obey, but which, in the exercise of their freedom, they may disobey. It cannot be doubted that man was endowed with full power to comply with all the divine requisitions. The law demanded nothing but the faithful exercise of those powers and affections which belong to human nature. The sum of all obedience was to love the Lord his God with all his heart. This was not only easy to an uncorrupted nature, but his highest happiness was connected with it. Man's probation would have continued without limit, unless God, in great condescension and kindness, had been pleased to enter into covenant with him.

The word covenant is to be understood in a much more general and comprehensive sense, than the common import of the English term *covenant*. It is a solemn transaction in which God appoints and establishes certain conditions on which man might become partaker of

eternal life in heaven, secure from all danger of forfeiting his interest in the favour of God. And as it pleased God that the human kind should come into the world in connexion with the first man, and should proceed from him as his children, it seemed good to infinite wisdom to make him the federal head and representative of all his posterity; so that upon his rendering perfect obedience to the commandments of God, for a certain limited period, eternal life would be secured to himself and to all his natural descendants; and on the other hand, if he transgressed the law given to him, that his sin should be considered as the sin of the whole race; or, in other words, should be so imputed to them, as that they should be brought into existence in the same moral condition into which he should fall, and subject to the same penalties. And in order that there might be a clear and decisive test of the obedience or disobedience of man, under this cove-

nant of works, a particular tree was selected, called on account of its use, "the tree of knowledge of good and evil." Although the fruit of this tree was good for food, and pleasant to the eyes, yet our first parents were forbidden to eat of it, or even to touch it; and thus it became a precise test of obedience or disobedience.

There was also another sacramental tree, called "the tree of life," the fruit of which was to be used to prevent all disease or tendency to death; or, more probably, to be a sign and seal of eternal life to our first parents, when their period of probation should be ended, provided they continued in obedience.

Man, when created out of the dust of the earth, was inspired with a rational and immortal soul, and placed in a pleasant garden, planted with every kind of trees, bearing nutritious fruits; the temperature of which was so mild that no covering for the human body was needed. As he was without experience, all know-

ledge necessary for the preservation of life and the performance of duty was given to him, and among these gifts was that of speech, without which there could have been no easy interchange of sentiments, nor any considerable progress in knowledge. Man was also made lord of the creation ; for God said to his newly formed creature, " Have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth on the earth." And in this respect, also, man was the image of his Creator. It was, therefore, left to Adam to give names to every beast of the field and fowl of the air ; and for this purpose they were made to pass before him, " and whatever Adam called every living creature, that was the name thereof."

It would seem from the tenor of the sacred history, that God conversed freely with his creature man, while he remained in Paradise. either by the ministry of holy angels ; or, more probably, by his



Son, assuming by anticipation the appearance of man. But, on points where the sacred Scriptures do not speak decisively, it is our wisdom to be silent.

Here we may contemplate the interesting condition of our first parents. They were holy and happy, and had nothing to fear but sin; yet, considering the natural weakness of creatures, their situation was most critical, and the everlasting interests of unnumbered millions were suspended on the fallible will of our first parents. And soon, alas! all was lost!

Upon a survey of the condition in which man was placed, when created, there are two reflections which force themselves on our minds.

1. The goodness of God to the first man and to the race. He was indeed fearfully and wonderfully made, as to the structure and constitution of his body, and, also, as to the intellectual endowments of

his mind, being enriched with the noble faculties of reason, memory, and imagination. But, above all, the goodness of the Creator is manifest in stamping upon the soul of man his own moral image, and in communicating to him all that knowledge which was requisite for the performance of duty and enjoyment of happiness. This goodness was also conspicuous in the external provision made for the supply of all his wants, and the gratification of all his innocent desires.

2. Comparing the condition of Adam in innocence with that of man now, we may form some idea of the greatness of our loss. A withering curse has fallen upon the ground itself, man has lost his perfection of life and health, and has forfeited his immortality. But the heaviest part of the curse has lighted on his moral powers. The image of God, which was his beauty and dignity, has been effaced. Corruption and disorder have

ensued ; and, in the place of happiness, misery, in its multiform kinds, has seized upon him. Alas ! the crown has fallen from his head, and the most fine gold has become dim !

## CHAPTER VI.

## FALL OF MAN.

How long our first parents continued in innocence we are not informed, and it would be vain to conjecture; but the common opinion has been that the time was short.

Already an enemy of God existed; a fallen spirit, who had led a multitude of his fellow angels into rebellion, who were cast out of their celestial habitations, but had liberty, for a season, to roam about the universe of God. Satan, the prince of the devils, envying the happiness of man, formed the design of seducing him from his allegiance, and bringing him into the same degraded and wretched

condition with himself. He, therefore, watched his opportunity, and knowing the woman to be the "weaker vessel," he resolved to make his first assault on her. She seems to have been curiously gazing on the beautiful fruit of the forbidden tree, when the arch-fiend, making use of the body of the serpent, which was the wisest of the animal tribes, and had originally an erect and pleasing form, "said unto the woman; yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, we may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: but of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, ye shall not surely die: for God doth know, that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened; and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw

that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise; she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat; and gave also unto her husband with her, and he did eat." Here the positive commandment of God was violated, the covenant of life broken, and the curse of death incurred, not only for himself, but for all his posterity. Philosophically to explain how a perfectly holy creature could sin is not easy; but as a practical matter the thing is not difficult. The mind of man was incapable of thinking of many things at once; to his constitution belong many natural desires and appetites. The objects suited to these might so occupy the mind, for a season, as to exclude higher and nobler ideas; and, in a moment of inadvertency, the lower propensities, which act with a blind force, might prevail with persons, before innocent, to do an act which God had forbidden; especially, when by an im-

prudent falsehood the danger of the act was positively denied, and when it was confidently alleged that great good would be the result.

Whether the man was influenced to eat, by the same motives which prevailed with the woman, is a matter of uncertainty. Many suppose that he was led by love to his wife to determine to perish with her, rather than be for ever separated from her. It matters little what were his motives; the fact was, that he deliberately transgressed the law of God, and thus involved a world in ruin.

The immediate consequences of the fatal transgression were, a new set of feelings, of guilt, shame, and fear, which caused them to cover themselves with fig leaves, and to hide themselves among the thick trees of the garden; and when questioned by their Maker they attempted to excuse themselves, and to charge their fault upon another. They were now driven from the garden, and flam-

ing cherubims stationed at the entrance to prevent their return. The ground was cursed for their sake, and doomed henceforth to bring forth thorns and briars; so that man would have to eat his bread by the sweat of his brow. The sentence of death was also confirmed. "Dust thou art, and unto dust thou shalt return." It may be asked, how the threatening, "In the day thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die," was executed, since Adam continued to live upon earth for more than nine hundred years? "Let God be true, but every man a liar." This threatening was executed, or began to be executed, that very day; for, from the moment of eating the forbidden fruit, he became mortal; death already began to work. Again, in death, as threatened in the penalty, every kind of evil is included. Temporal death, consisting of a separation of soul and body, was not the principal thing; but spiritual death, which consists in a separation from God,



a loss of his favour, and image, and which perpetuated, is eternal death, commenced on the very day on which man sinned. While man, after the fall, retained all his physical powers of soul and body, and continued still to be a moral and accountable creature, he entirely lost that clothing of moral excellence, which was the beauty and glory of his nature. He was now dead in law, and dead in trespasses and sins; and from being a holy being, became totally depraved; that is, destitute of any principle of true holiness; but capable of unlimited increase in wickedness.

That the posterity of Adam "sinned in him, and fell with him in his first transgression," is evident from the fact that they have all become mortal, and are subjected to all the temporal evils which fell upon him. They are all excluded from paradise, and are forced to till the earth with the sweat of their brow, which still groans under the curse, and

spontaneously brings forth noxious weeds instead of useful grains and fruits. Woman is still, all over the world, subject to the same pains in parturition, which were threatened to Eve. But more than this, men come into the world destitute of that holiness, or original righteousness, in which Adam was created. "By nature all are children of wrath. All go astray from their earliest years. There is none that doeth good, no not one. There is no fear of God before their eyes, and the way of peace have they not known." This state of corruption is not confined to idolatrous Gentiles, but belongs also to the Jews, who were in external covenant with God. "All have sinned and come short of the glory of God." And these streams of iniquity David traces up to the polluted fountain, when he cries out, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me."

That the universality of death in the human race is owing to the transgression

of Adam, is clearly evinced from the express declarations of Holy Scripture. "As in Adam all die, so in Christ shall all be made alive." "As by one man sin entered into the world, and death by sin; so death hath passed on all men, because that (or in whom) all have sinned." "As by the disobedience of one, many were made sinners." "By one man's offence, death reigned by one." "Through the offence of one many are dead." "By the offence of one, judgment came upon all men to condemnation." And the facts, known by universal experience, are in exact accordance with these declarations of the Bible. All men die. And that this is on account of the imputation of Adam's sin, is evident from this, that death reigns over those who have not sinned after the similitude of Adam's transgression; that is, over infants who have not been guilty of any actual violation of the law of God.

Whether it was just in God to constitute Adam the representative of all his posterity, and suspend their salvation on his obedience, is not a question for us to discuss. Whatever God does is just, and not only just but wise; and though darkness may rest on this transaction, this is owing to our ignorance and prejudice. We need not fear that the Judge of all the earth will not be able to vindicate his own dispensations to the whole universe.

Some have thought to evade or lessen the apparent hardship of the case, by denying the imputation of Adam's sin to his posterity, and maintaining that children were only punished for the depraved nature derived from Adam. But how came they to inherit this depraved nature? Is not this the principal part of the curse? And it goes a very little way to relieve the mind which labours, to say that infants are punished for la-

tent depravity, instead of suffering for the sin of Adam.

Instead of cavilling and complaining of the dispensations of the Almighty, by which we have become miserable sinners, let us not cease to bewail the deep corruption of our nature; and let us, instead of perplexing ourselves with fruitless inquiries about the principles of the divine government, by which we have been involved in this ruin, earnestly seek to know what that gracious remedy is which God has provided for our recovery. The fact is certain, that we are in a depraved and miserable state, and unless we are redeemed from it, we must be forever in a state of degradation and misery. When it is asserted, that man is totally depraved, the meaning is not that he is as wicked as he is capable of being; or, that all men are sinners in equal degree; but, that all men are by nature destitute of any principle of true holiness; all

love the creature supremely and their carnal hearts are at enmity with God, and not subject unto his law, neither, indeed, can be. It is evident from what has been said, that man is in a helpless condition.

## CHAPTER VII.

COVENANT OF GRACE ; OR, PLAN OF  
REDEMPTION.

IN this treatise, the word "covenant" is used in a wide sense, to correspond with the latitude which belongs to the original terms, of which this is a translation. Without attempting to give a very exact, or logical definition of the phrase "covenant of grace," I would say, that by it is meant the whole plan of redemption, from its commencement to its consummation ; or, that gracious method of bestowing salvation on elect sinners, which is revealed in the holy Scriptures.

The fall of man, by which God's chief work on earth was ruined, was not an

unexpected event which took the omniscient God by surprise; nor could it disconcert that scheme which had been originally conceived in the eternal mind. "Known unto God are all his works from the beginning of the world," (Acts xv. 18.) Although God is not the author of sin, and can never look upon evil but with the strongest disapprobation; yet, having created man a free, accountable creature, and having endowed him with full ability to obey the law under which he was placed, he chose to leave him to the freedom of his own will, without exerting any direct influence on him, either to preserve him in obedience, or to cause him to fall. And, although he knew that man would fall into sin and ruin, yet he purposed to permit this, that is, not to hinder it; because he knew that he could make it the occasion of a more illustrious display of his attributes, especially of his justice and mercy, than could be made under other circumstances.



It is essential to just views of the covenant of grace, to assume it as an undoubted truth, that the condemnation of mankind, under the covenant of works, was just, and that the Ruler of the universe was not under any obligations to devise any plan of recovery for fallen man, any more than for fallen angels; for, if it would not have been just to leave men under the curse which they had incurred, then that covenant or law, under which man was placed, was not a righteous constitution; and if it would not have been just to leave the human race in the ruin in which they were involved, then their deliverance would not be a matter of grace, but of justice. A difference of opinion may exist among the orthodox, as to the kind and degree of punishment to which the human race would have been subjected, if the law had been executed fully upon them, but there can be but one opinion respecting the justice of their punishment, by all

who entertain correct opinions respecting the character and dispensations of the Governor of the universe. God was not bound to provide a Redeemer; this was a matter of mere grace and favour.

The origin of the covenant of grace was the unparalleled, incomprehensible love of God to sinners of the human race. The obstacles in the way of accomplishing the salvation of those whose death was demanded by law and justice, were apparently insuperable. It may be presumed, that if the problem, how God could be just and yet justify the ungodly, had been proposed to a conclave of the brightest angels in heaven, they could not have worked out a salvation: it would have baffled their utmost intellectual efforts. That God cannot cease to treat his creatures according to the principles of eternal justice is most evident; and that justice required that the sinner should suffer, according to his demerit, is equally evident. Where, then, is there

any foundation for hope in regard to those who have once transgressed? And not only the justice, but the truth of God stood in the way of the sinner's salvation. God had threatened the penalty of death, interminable death; and the Ruler of the universe must maintain the truth of his word, as it respects his threatenings as well as his promises, "God is not a man that he should lie; nor the son of man, that he should repent," (Num. xxix. 13.) But that which could not be discovered by the wisdom of creatures, was devised by the infinite wisdom of God. In the counsels of the adorable Trinity the plan was agreed upon. Between the Father and the Son, a transaction took place, which may strictly be termed a covenant, for, speaking after the manner of men, there were mutual stipulations entered into between the high contracting parties. The Father, as Legislator and Governor of the universe, appoints the Son to the office of

Mediator, and, on certain conditions, gives to him a chosen people, elected from the common mass of fallen man, "according to his own good purpose." The Son willingly accepts the arduous office, and engages to comply with the proposed conditions; and the Holy Spirit consents to perform his part in the execution and consummation of the glorious plan. But, contriving and planning was not all that was requisite; the Mediator, in order to redeem man must obey and suffer in his place; and this rendered it necessary, that he should descend to earth and be born of a woman, and made under the law. And this stoop of humiliation was not enough; the Son of God must suffer and die, in the room of the creature man. And, in order that he might exhaust the penalty due to man for sin, the Redeemer must not only die, but his death must be of the most bitter and accursed kind. To all this he consented and covenanted on behalf

of his chosen, to meet all the demands of law and justice against them.

If any should ask, what evidence we have of this covenant of redemption, we answer, in the words of the Mediator, "I appoint," or, as the original word imports, "I give by covenant, unto you, a kingdom, as the Father hath appointed unto me." Luke xxii. 29. Again, "As thou hast given him power over all flesh, that he should give eternal life to as many as thou hast given him." (John xxii. 2.) "I have manifested thy name unto the men which thou gavest me out of the world; thine they were and thou gavest them me," (ver. 6.) "I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which thou gavest me," (ver. 9.) "Keep through thine own name those whom thou hast given me." And the solemn declaration in the eighty-ninth Psalm, "I have made a covenant with my chosen, I have sworn unto David my servant," has always, by the church, been

referred to the Messiah, to the spiritual David, David's Lord, and David's Son.

But why was this salvation confined to a certain favoured number, called the elect of God? This doctrine of the sovereignty of divine grace, has, from the beginning, been offensive to human reason. The selection of men, and not of angels, as the object of redemption, can be borne with; but that, out of the same mass, some should be taken, confessedly no better than others by nature; and that many should be reprobated or left, no worse than those elected, has ever been a stumbling-block to multitudes; and hence, however plainly the doctrine be revealed, they will not receive it; and frequently manifest great hostility to all who maintain and preach it, as did the Jews when our Lord inculcated it by reference to certain facts in the sacred history. But however offensive this doctrine is to human reason, since it is clearly revealed, and often expressed in the word of God,

we are not at liberty to relinquish or conceal it. If God might justly have left all men to perish in their sin, certainly he may justly leave a part in that state of ruin into which they have fallen. As all men are by nature children of wrath, the redemption of a part cannot alter or affect the condition of the rest. Because the pardoning power in the State releases certain persons from the penalty of the law, this does not render it unjust to punish others who are under a sentence of condemnation.

The justice of God in this case is easily vindicated; but it is not so easy to reconcile this proceeding with his benevolence. If God could as easily have saved all as a part, why did he not manifest his goodness in doing so? To which it may be answered that we do not know the reasons of the divine conduct in this matter. He, as an absolute Sovereign, has a right to do as seemeth good with his own. He constantly refers election

to his own good pleasure, to the counsel of his own will. He has infinitely good reasons; but as he has not revealed them, we have no right to inquire after them.

The manifestation of God's gracious purpose, in the covenant of grace, began to be made immediately after the fall; first, in the sentence pronounced on the serpent, in which it was declared that the seed of the woman should bruise the head of the serpent, that is, of the old serpent, which is the devil. And next by the institution of bloody sacrifices, and accepting the offerings of this kind made in faith, as in the case of Abel; and by various communications to the saints, until the time of Abraham, with whom God entered into a special covenant, and to whom he made many gracious promises, and granted peculiar privileges to his descendants, and separated the chosen race from all the world, and placed the seal of his covenant in their flesh.



But when the seed of Jacob had grown to be a great nation in Egypt, where they were held in abject and cruel bondage, God appeared unto Moses at mount Horeb in the burning bush, and commissioned him to deliver his people, and by a series of wonderful miracles, to conduct them to Canaan, which land four hundred years before he had promised to Abraham. While in the wilderness, at the foot of mount Sinai, God appeared in dreadful majesty to all the people, and uttered his holy law in ten commandments in the midst of thunder and lightning, and the sound of a trumpet, while the whole mountain burned with fire.

The moral law was binding on man by nature, but it had become so much obliterated, that it became necessary to republish it, that the people having the true standard of duty before them, might be convinced of their sins, and driven to seek refuge in the atoning blood, so copiously shed on the Jewish altar.

Besides the moral law, which was not only proclaimed by the voice of God, but engraved by the finger of God on two tables of stone, he gave many ritual laws to be observed, instituted a priesthood, and consecrated the family of Aaron to this service, and directed Moses to erect a tabernacle for worship, exactly according to a pattern showed him on the mount, where he remained in the presence of God forty days, without eating or drinking, at two different times. All these institutions, of a ceremonial kind, were intended to be a shadow of good things to come.

This dispensation, administered by sacrifices, by types, and prophecies, continued, without essential change, until it was superseded by the more glorious dispensation of the gospel, introduced after the advent of the Messiah; who being the Mediator of the new covenant, and having answered all the types and fulfilled all the prophecies, brought that dispensa-

tion to an end. And the New Testament dispensation, with clearer light, greater liberty, more of the spirit of adoption, and a spiritual worship not confined to any particular place, nor burdened with external forms and rites. This dispensation, it is believed, will continue until the second advent of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

## CHAPTER VIII.

## INCARNATION.

CHRIST did not come into the world until about four thousand years from the creation had elapsed. By this delay it clearly appeared how deep was the depravity of fallen man, as all nations, the Israelites only excepted, departed from God, and lost the knowledge of his true character. And having apostatized from the worship and service of their Creator, they universally, with the exception already mentioned, addicted themselves to the most abominable idolatries, and to every species of degrading vice.

This apostasy was not owing to any

defect of external light, for, as Paul teaches, "that which may be known of God is manifest in them, for God hath showed it unto them. For the invisible things of him, from the creation of the world, are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even his eternal godhead, so that they are without excuse. Because when they knew God they glorified him not as God, neither were they thankful; but they became vain in their imaginations, and their foolish heart was darkened. Professing themselves to be wise, they became fools, and changed the glory of the uncorruptible God into an image made like to corruptible man, and to birds, and four footed beasts, and creeping things." It was proper that the world should have the opportunity of making trial of their own wisdom before the device of infinite wisdom should be manifested. Opportunity had also been thus afforded to prepare the way for the advent of the Mediator, by a system of types

and prophecies, which clearly designated his person and offices, and thus furnished indubitable evidence of his being indeed the Christ of God. The time selected for the advent of the Saviour was also suitable, because the world was then full of inhabitants; the human mind had been highly cultivated, and the intellectual faculties had attained their utmost vigour, and all the civilized world were subject to one government; and the Latin and Greek languages were understood through the whole extent of the Roman empire. And although in the previous age civil discord and desolating wars disturbed the empire, all was now reduced to peace under Augustus Cæsar, so that a favourable opportunity was afforded for propagating the gospel among the nations. Besides, the time of Messiah's advent had been fixed in the distinct enunciations of prophecy. Shiloh was to come before the sceptre had entirely departed from Judah, which was

now far on the wane. He was to fill the temple of Zerubbabel with his glory, which was soon after this destroyed. And the specified weeks of Daniel, when the Messiah should be cut off, were drawing to a close. The "fulness of time" was therefore come, when "God sent forth his Son, made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law."

It had been predicted by Isaiah, that "a virgin should conceive and bring forth a Son, and that his name should be EMMANUEL, God with us. It was also foretold by the same prophet, that a child should be born, who should be the MIGHTY GOD. There was, therefore, a general expectation among the Jews, that the advent of the Messiah was at hand; and this expectation was increased, when John the Baptist began to preach in the wilderness, saying, "the kingdom of heaven is at hand;" thus fulfilling the prophecy of Isaiah; "The

voice of him that crieth in the wilderness, prepare ye the way of the Lord, make his paths straight;" (Isaiah xi. 5;) and also the prediction of Malachi, "Behold, I will send my Messenger, and he will prepare my way before me." And again, "Behold, I will send you Elijah, the prophet, before the coming of the great and dreadful day of the Lord." (Mal. iii. 1; iv. 5.)

The place of the Messiah's birth had been explicitly named by the prophet Micah; so that when the wise men from the east came to Jerusalem, and inquired where he was to be born, who was King of the Jews, Herod, the king, called together a convention of all the priests and scribes, to determine this question, which they appear to have agreed upon unanimously, for they immediately answered, "in Bethlehem of Judea," and referred to the prophecy of Micah. The providence of God in bringing about the fulfilment of this prophecy was remarkable,



for Mary and her husband resided at Nazareth. But it had been so ordered by an imperial edict, that every person should resort to the town to which his family properly belonged, to be registered, with a view to a general taxation; and thus the mother of our Lord was brought to Bethlehem at the very time when she was to be delivered of the child, conceived in her womb by the power of the Holy Spirit. And as there was not found room for them in the inn, the Son of God was born in a stable, and laid in a manger.

This glorious event for our lost world, was not suffered to take place without suitable notice: for however inattentive the great men of this world might be to this humble, but miraculous birth, the angels of God had their attention directed to it as the most important event which had ever occurred in our world. One of the heavenly host, probably Gabriel, appeared to a company of shep-

herds in the vicinity, who were watching their flocks by night, and said, "Behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people, for unto you is born, this day, in the city of David, a Saviour, who is Christ the Lord." And as soon as he had delivered his message, "a multitude of the heavenly host was with the angel, praising God, and saying, Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, and good will to men."

Until Christ was about thirty years of age, he lived in retirement at Nazareth. When John, his forerunner, had been for some time engaged in his public ministry preaching repentance and baptizing the people, Jesus came forth, and was baptized in the river Jordan. Having voluntarily placed himself under the law, it was proper that he should comply with not only the moral precepts, but with all the ceremonial institutions then in force. For although he could not attend

on these institutions as one who needed forgiveness, or purification, or repentance, yet as he came to take the sinner's place, he obeyed all the laws then obligatory on the people; for in infancy, he was circumcised, when grown up, he attended the Jewish worship at the temple, partook of the passover, joined in the worship of the synagogue, and, as John was commissioned of God to preach and baptize, he submitted to his baptism, though John at first forbade him; and the reason which he assigned was, "For thus it becometh us to fulfil all righteousness." By the incarnation the divine and human natures were mysteriously united. "The word was made flesh, and dwelt among us." "God was manifest in the flesh." "He that was in the form of God, and thought it not robbery to be equal with God, made himself of no reputation, but took on him the form of a servant, and being found in fashion as a man, he humbled himself, and became obedient unto death."

## CHAPTER IX.

THE EXPIATORY SUFFERINGS OF CHRIST ;  
OR, THE ATONEMENT.

AN atonement is that which expiates sin ; which reconciles an offended party ; which makes satisfaction for offences committed.

The reason why an atonement was necessary, was the inflexible nature of divine justice. This attribute leads the Ruler of the universe to render to every one his due ; to treat every one according to his character. The justice of God was manifested in giving to man a righteous law, and annexing a penalty exactly proportioned to the demerit of every transgression. Such a penalty being annexed to the law, it is evident that to execute it is

a righteous thing ; and when this penalty is incurred by transgression, the Judge of all the earth, acting justly, must inflict it. He cannot deny himself. " He is not a man that he should lie, or the son of man that he should repent." If the penalty of the law might be set aside in one instance, it might in all, and then government would be at an end. Indeed, no reason can be assigned for a difference ; if one sinner is exempted from punishment, the same treatment should be extended to all ; for, in the administration of law and justice, there should be uniformity ; though that principle does not apply to the dispensation of grace.

How then can any sinner be saved ? This is a problem, which we are persuaded no finite intelligence could have solved. But, what created wisdom could not discern, the wisdom of the Triune God was able to accomplish. The principle of an adequate atonement by a qualified Surety was the one adopted. But who is

sufficient to make the requisite satisfaction to law and justice; for, upon the principles already stated, such a satisfaction was necessary. No mere creature could be the substitute; for, beside that such an one would owe obedience for himself to the full extent of his powers, the actions and sufferings of a mere creature could not possess that merit which could be accepted, to answer the demands of the law against millions. Neither could any person of the Godhead perform the work of redemption. The Deity can neither suffer nor obey. This mighty difficulty can only be overcome by the constitution of a *person*, in whom both natures shall be united; that is, by the second person in the glorious Trinity assuming human nature into such intimate union with himself, that the actions and sufferings of this nature shall be considered the actions and sufferings of the person of the Son of God. That such a substitution was admissible depended on the wisdom and will of God. Among men

there would exist strong reasons against permitting the innocent to die for the guilty; but when we inquire what these reasons are, we find that not one of them applies to the redemption of Christ. He has a complete right to dispose of himself, and the power to qualify himself for the arduous work; and by admitting the substitution of Christ in the room of his chosen people, no injury is sustained in any quarter; for, though the Redeemer must endure an inconceivable weight of sorrow for a season, for this he will reap a glorious and endless reward. And, though the guilty escape, yet the plan provides for their complete reformation; and the mercy of God is illustriously displayed, and placed in a light in which it never could have been, if this plan had not been revealed.

And not only is mercy and condescension exhibited in a bright and peculiar light, which gives to all the intelligent creation new discoveries of the divine

character ; but justice, which would have appeared glorious in the punishment of the guilty, in exact proportion to their demerit, yet shines forth with a far brighter lustre in the sufferings of the only begotten Son of God, than in the condign punishment of a world of guilty sinners. Here, then, we see what the nature of an atonement must be. It must remove those obstacles which stood in the way of the sinner's salvation. These arose from the law and justice of God, which demanded the life of the transgressor. The Redeemer, therefore, must make a full satisfaction to law and justice, or the sinner cannot be saved. He must render a meritorious obedience to the law which men had broken, and receive the punishment of their sins in his own person. The sufferings of Christ were, therefore, of a strictly vicarious nature. "He bare our sins in his own body, on the tree." "He died, the just for the unjust, to bring us to God." "He was wounded



for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities." "Our iniquities were laid upon him." No doubt he set us a glorious example of perfect patience and fortitude, in enduring so much pain and ignominy; but example was not the main end of these sufferings, which would place them on the same level with those of other martyrs. And, it is not disputed, that the death of Christ is calculated to produce a moral impression on all intelligent minds, but even this was not the direct end of Christ's sufferings, according to the Scriptures; but he died as an expiatory victim, a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice, an atonement for all the sins of his chosen, as a ransom to redeem them for their bondage; yea, as a curse, to redeem them that were under the curse. And this view of the atonement is vital to the Christian system. It is plainly the doctrine of the Old as well as the New Testament; and it ever has been the doctrine of every sound

part of the Christian church; and it would be easy to show that the objections to it are either frivolous, or they are such as subvert the gospel of Christ, and bring in another gospel, which exposes the abettors of it to the anathema of Paul.

As to the sufferings endured by Christ which are expiatory, we could say that all that he endured in our nature, and indeed his whole state of humiliation, should be considered as belonging to his expiation; when he first felt the pangs incident to infancy, when he went about from day to day, “a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief,”—when reproached, slandered, and reviled—when hungry, thirsty, and weary—when filled with grief at the hardness and perverseness of the people, which drew tears from his eyes—when bathed in his own blood in Gethsemane—when betrayed, bound, dragged to trial—when falsely

accused, and condemned—when mocked and reviled—when scourged—when crowned with thorns—when fainting under the cross—when nailed to the tree—when exposed to the profane gaze of the multitude, denuded of his garments—when exhausted with pain and thirst—and above all, when forsaken of God—and when he breathed out his soul. And after he was taken from the cross and laid in the sepulchre, though he suffered no positive pain, yet he was bearing the curse or penalty of the law, which was death. And if it be asked for whom did the Redeemer bear all this, the answer he has given, “I lay down my life for the sheep.” He loved his church and gave himself for it. But his atonement, considered in its intrinsic value and suitability, is infinite and sufficient, if applied, to save the whole world.

The sufferings of Christ being those of a divine person, have an infinite value;

it follows, therefore, that although the punishment of the sinner was everlasting, yet Christ could exhaust the penalty of the law in a limited time; that is, his sufferings and death, though limited to a short period, were more than an equivalent for the eternal sufferings of those for whom he laid down his life. And in making this vicarious atonement, it was not at all necessary that the Mediator should be the subject of remorse and despair; for these are not essential to the penalty of the law, but merely incidental, arising from the circumstances and moral character of the sufferer. But it was necessary that our substitute should suffer a painful and accursed death, for this was specifically threatened. Some have supposed that Christ endured something of the torments of the damned after his death, as the creed says, "he went into hell," but the word *hell* here signifies no more than the place of departed spirits.

Christ's sufferings were finished on the cross; and on that very day his Spirit entered into paradise. It cannot be reasonably doubted that all those for whom Christ offered himself a sacrifice, will eventually be saved.

## CHAPTER X.

RESURRECTION AND ASCENSION OF  
CHRIST.

THE blessed Redeemer, having been three days in the grave, according to his own oft repeated prediction; that is, a part of three days, which, according to the usual method of computing time, was reckoned for three days, rose from the dead, and during forty days, which he remained upon earth, he appeared a number of times to his disciples, and gave them not only ocular but palpable evidence of the reality of his resurrection. And that there might remain no doubt of his identity, he showed them his hands and his feet, and even condescended to permit

them to put their fingers into the print of the nails, and to thrust their hands into the opening made in his side by the soldier's spear, after his death. And, on one occasion, he appeared to above five hundred of his disciples convened in Galilee, on a mountain where he had promised to meet them, before his crucifixion. As the disciples had not understood his predictions respecting his death and resurrection, they were very slow to believe even their own senses. On this account the risen Saviour took pains to remove every shadow of doubt, and in several instances ate and drank in their presence, just as before his death. This time was also improved to give the Apostles all needful instructions, respecting their ministry, after he should leave them.

At the expiration of the forty days, he led his disciples out to mount Olivet, near to Bethany, where he blessed them, and was parted from them, and carried

up to heaven, in the midst of thousands of angels, according to what the Holy Ghost says in the sixty-eighth Psalm, "The chariots of God are twenty thousand, even thousands of angels. The Lord is among them, as in Sinai, in the holy place. Thou hast ascended on high, thou hast led captivity captive. Thou hast received gifts for men, yea, for the rebellious also, that the Lord God might dwell among them;" which passage Paul expressly applies to Christ. (Ephes. iv. 8, 9.)

Until the time of his ascension, as far as appears, Christ's body remained the same as before his death; but as a gross body of flesh and blood, though free from every stain, is not suited to the heavenly state, it is reasonable to suppose, that Christ's body now underwent such a sudden change, as we are informed will pass on the bodies of the saints who shall be found alive upon earth, when Christ shall make his second appearance. Before



his ascension he had flesh and bones, which could be handled and felt; but now he assumed that glorious body in which he now appears in heaven, and in which every eye shall behold him, when he shall appear in the clouds of heaven, with all his holy angels, to judge the world.

That Christ appeared, after his resurrection, in the same body which was nailed to the cross, and laid in the sepulchre, is as evident from the sacred Scriptures, as words can make it. Luke gives the following explicit testimony: "Jesus himself stood in the midst of them and saith unto them, Peace be unto you. But they were terrified and affrighted, and supposed that they had seen a spirit. And he said unto them, Why are ye troubled? and why do thoughts arise in your hearts? Behold my hands and my feet, that it is I myself. Handle me and see; for a spirit hath not flesh and bones as ye see me have. And when he had

thus spoken, he showed them his hands and his feet." And though the fact is not mentioned, we may certainly infer, that Christ's body underwent a change before he entered heaven; for we are assured that "flesh and blood do not inherit the kingdom of heaven;" and as this is true in regard to believers, it is equally so respecting Christ. Still it is the self same body which is now in heaven at the right hand of God, which suffered on the cross—but glorified.

## CHAPTER XI.

## MEDIATORIAL OFFICES OF CHRIST.

THE offices of Christ have long been divided into three; the prophetic, sacerdotal, and regal; and this is not an arbitrary distinction, but is founded in the wants of men; for he who undertakes to save sinners must be qualified to deliver them from their ignorance, from their guilt, and from their depravity; and he must have power to protect them from all their enemies, and raise them from death and the grave, and bring them to the possession of eternal life. When Christ was upon earth, most of his time, during his public ministry, was spent in teaching. And in the exercise of this office, "He taught with authority, and

not as the scribes." Even in the judgment of his enemies, "never man spake like this man." But, when about to leave the world, he promised to his disciples another teacher, who would remain with them, and lead them into all truth, and who should bring to their remembrance whatever he had said to them. Thus, he now exercises the office of a prophet, by his word and Spirit, by which agency all the children of God are taught of him; and through faith in the holy Scriptures, are made wise unto salvation. By the law they obtain the knowledge of sin; by the gospel they are made acquainted with the only remedy; and by the influence of the Holy Spirit are enabled "to grow in grace, and in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ." As Moses prophesied, that the Lord should raise up a prophet like unto him; that is one who should be the author of a new dispensation; so, the same glorious person is predicted in the Psalms, as "a priest,

not after the order of Aaron, but after the order of Melchizedek ; a priest who should have no predecessor nor successor, but should possess in himself an everlasting priesthood ; and, who by the sacrifice of himself, should be able to accomplish what the Levitical priests never could. What they performed and exhibited in shadows, he executed in substance. As their sacrifices and oblations were to remove ceremonial guilt and uncleanness, he, by the one offering of himself, obtained eternal redemption for us. And as the high priest, on the great day of atonement, after slaying the sin-offering, both for himself and the people, carried the blood into the most holy place, and sprinkled it on the mercy seat ; so Christ, the High Priest of our profession, having offered himself as a sacrifice on the cross, has entered into the most holy place, not made with hands, where he appears before God, to present, as it were, the “ blood which cleanseth from all sin.”

“For Christ is not entered into the holy places, made with hands, which are the figures of the true ; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.” “For by one offering he hath perfected for ever them that are sanctified,” (Heb. ix. 24; x. 14.) Two things belong to the office of priesthood, first, oblation, or the offering a sacrifice ; secondly, the sprinkling the blood, or the presentment of the oblation before God. This, in Scripture, is called intercession ; because, on the ground of having complied with the stipulated conditions in the covenant of redemption, the Mediator has a right to claim the deliverance of those for whom he undertook. This, therefore, is a very necessary part of the mediatorial work. It is the moving cause of all that is done in the application of the purchased redemption. Therefore it is written, “that he is able to save to the uttermost all that come to God by him ; seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them. And

here we see the reason why the true believer never comes again into condemnation, notwithstanding all his sins and infirmities; because he has an Advocate with the Father, who is the propitiation for his sins. As fast as he contracts guilt his sins are blotted out; or, rather, as he has the righteousness of Christ set down to his account, he cannot come into condemnation. "If God be for us, who can be against us?" "It is God that justifieth, who is he that condemneth? Who shall lay any thing to the charge of God's elect? Shall Christ, that died, or rather is risen again, who is even at the right hand of God, who also maketh intercession for us?"

The Christian then, in all his trials, under all his burdens, when tempted to despond or despair, should have recourse to the cross, and should look for comfort to the prevalent intercessions of his great High Priest?

In the second Psalm it is written, "I

will set my king upon my holy hill of Zion." And Jesus Christ was born a king. He was lineally descended from David, to whose family the regal authority was promised for ever. When Pilate interrogated him, whether he was a king, he did not deny it, but admitted and asserted it, saying, "Thou sayest that I am a king. For this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness to the truth." After his resurrection, he declared to his disciples, "all power in heaven, and in earth, is given unto me." And we read, "that angels and principalities are subject to him." He is made "head over all things for his church, which is his body." He is therefore called "the King of kings and Lord of lords." "For he must reign until he hath put all enemies under his feet." In the exercise of his regal office, he governs all providential events and revolutions, so as to promote the ultimate glory and triumph of his kingdom. He



holds under restraint all those enemies, who would otherwise destroy his sheep. Over these he watches with a shepherd's care. In the exercise of his regal office he will judge the world in righteousness. "We must all stand before the judgment seat of Christ." "When the Son of man shall come in his glory, and all the holy angels with him, then shall he sit on the throne of his glory. Then shall the King say to those on his right hand, Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world."

## CHAPTER XII.

## JUSTIFICATION.

CORRECT ideas on the subject of a sinner's justification are exceedingly important; because this is a cardinal point in the Christian system. A mistake here will be apt to extend its pernicious influence to every other important doctrine. And there is in human nature a strong tendency to build on a false foundation; because man, when created, was placed under a covenant of works; and, by nature, he knows no other way, than "do and live." And human reason and the dictates of conscience, urge men to seek the favour of God by obeying his will. If we were able to render to the law such an obedience as would se-

cure justification, this would still be the right way, and no other need be sought. "If there had been a law," says Paul, "which could have given life, verily righteousness (or justification) should have been by the law." "But what the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the spirit."

In most cases we should think it unnecessary and inexpedient to contend about the meaning of a word, when they who used it explained the sense in which they take it; but, here it is exceedingly important, to ascertain the scriptural meaning of this word; for this is the point from which men's opinions are most apt to diverge from those of divine revelation. And if we put a wrong sense on the word "justification," it will be

sure to favour the dangerous doctrine of human merit.

We would, therefore, lay it down as a truth, capable of the clearest proof, that justification, as used in Scripture, does not mean any change wrought within us, but a change of our relation or standing under the law. As condemnation does not signify the making a man wicked, but declaring him guilty; so justification, which is the very opposite of condemnation, does not mean the infusion of holiness or justice into the hearts of men; but, it is the sentence of a judge, declaring that the person to whom it appertains is acquitted from every charge, and stands right in the view of the law. It is then the act of the Judge of the universe, by which it is declared, that all condemnation is removed, and that the sinful man is accepted as righteous in the eye of the law. It is evident, that there can be no justification by any law, unless the person accused can plead a perfect right-

eousness; for if he has sinned but once, that one sin will prevent his justification as certainly as a thousand. After Adam had committed the first sin, it was impossible he should ever be justified by his own works. And thus the word is used in regard to human laws. If a man is arraigned before any just tribunal, and it is proved that he has committed one felonious act, the judge cannot justify him. And hence, it appears evident to reason, and the same thing is repeatedly and emphatically taught in Scripture, "that by the deeds of the law no man can be justified in the sight of God." And the reason simply is, that no man's obedience to the law is perfect. The idea entertained by some, that a sinner's imperfect obedience may be the ground of justification, is, therefore, evidently absurd. And the opinion, that the moral law is changed, and so relaxed as to be level to the capacity of sinful creatures, is false, and unscriptural, and tends to

introduce another gospel, entirely subversive of the true system of salvation. Man's sincere obedience, though imperfect, may be an evidence that he is in a justified state, but never can be the ground of the sentence of the Judge.

The question then returns, "How can any man be just with God, since all have sinned and come short of the glory of God?" To which we answer, "That a man under the gospel is justified by faith, without the deeds of the law; that is, he is justified by the perfect righteousness of Christ received by faith. This righteousness is imputed to the believing sinner; that is, God treats him as if he himself had wrought it out.

God, the Judge, views the sinner, considered in his own character, as he is, chargeable with innumerable transgressions of his holy law; but, when this ungodly man truly believes and becomes united to Christ, he imputes to him the perfect righteousness of his Surety, who

has in his stead, obeyed the precept and suffered the penalty of the law; and thus rendered a complete satisfaction to both law and justice. He can, therefore, be just, while he justifies the ungodly; for the sentence is not pronounced on the ground of any righteousness which the believing sinner has of his own, but entirely on the ground of the perfect righteousness of the Mediator, which is accepted, as though it had been rendered by himself. And in this transaction there is no erroneous judgment; for the Judge sees every thing as it is, and pardons the sinner and accepts his person, because he is seen "not having on his own righteousness, which is of the law, but the righteousness which is of the faith of Christ; even the righteousness which is of God by faith."

Some are willing to admit that the forgiveness of sin is on account of the atonement of Christ; but they are strongly opposed to the idea, that Christ's actual

obedience to the law should be the ground of the believer's being adjudged to eternal life. But, if this be excluded, then the believer's own obedience must be the ground on which he receives life. But, here again, its imperfection renders it impossible that it should entitle him to any reward, much less to the reward of eternal life. The Scriptures, however, settle this dispute. Paul says, "As by the disobedience of one many were made sinners; so by the obedience of one shall many be made righteous." Christ is, by the prophet, emphatically called, "THE LORD OUR RIGHTEOUSNESS."

This is charged upon the Jews as their fatal mistake, "That they went about to establish a righteousness of their own, and did not submit unto the righteousness of God." And it is then declared, that "Christ is the end of the law for righteousness to every one that believeth"

As it is said, "that faith is imputed



for righteousness ;” many have adopted the opinion, that the act of faith is graciously accepted, instead of a legal righteousness. But this would be inconsistent with the scope of the apostle, whose main object is to show, that justification is entirely gratuitous, on account of Christ’s merit ; but faith is as much our act and our work, as any thing else ; and, if a man is justified by his own faith, then boasting is no more excluded, than when he seeks justification by many good acts. Besides, the Judge of all cannot declare, that the mere act of faith answers all the demands of the law. Therefore, when it is said, that faith is imputed for righteousness, it must relate to the object of faith, even the perfect righteousness of Christ. If a condemned criminal should be pardoned by his prince, on account of the intercession of his own son, when the pardon is offered, the man gladly accepts it ; this act of acceptance may be said to save him from death ; but,

the true ground of his deliverance is the intercession of the prince. In this way, as a mere instrument, faith justifies the sinner, and is imputed for righteousness, because it lays hold of and appropriates the righteousness of God, by which the law of God has been completely satisfied.

Others, considering faith as the root of every Christian virtue, and the spring of all good works, adopt the opinion, that to be justified by faith is the same as to be justified by our whole evangelical obedience, and that the works excluded by Paul, are either ceremonial observances, or “dead works,” not proceeding from faith. To this theory the same objection lies, as has been already urged; namely, that this righteousness is imperfect, and no imperfect righteousness can justify. And another objection, which is fatal to this theory, is, that the sinner is justified completely when he first believes, “There is no condemnation to them that are in Christ Jesus.” “Being justified freely by

his grace," "being justified by faith." But, if evangelical obedience is the ground of justification, no man can be justified in this life, for he will be engaged in working out this righteousness all his life. This consequence being inevitable, a learned commentator maintains, that there is no justification till the day of judgment.

There is nothing more difficult than to bring men off from dependence, in some form, on their own righteousness. Therefore, the advocates of human merit, and justification by works, have seized with avidity upon the words of the apostle James, who declares that a man is justified by works and not by faith alone. If he used the words "faith and justification" in the same sense as that in which they are used by Paul, there would be a flat contradiction between these two apostles. Thus Luther viewed the matter at first, and, therefore, for a while, rejected the epistle of James. But, when the scope of this apostle is considered, and the

whole discourse impartially considered it will be found, that in doctrine he and Paul did not disagree, though they employ the terms mentioned in a somewhat different sense. James was engaged in refuting the opinion of certain professors, who held that all that was necessary to justification was a speculative assent to the truth. He shows that such a faith, being dead, could not justify. His doctrine is, that a living, operative faith, is necessary; and, that our faith must be shown by our works; and this is the same thing which Paul taught. Moreover, he uses the word justification, in the passage referred to, not for a sinner's acceptance with God at first, but by it he means that which showed his sincerity; those good works which the saints perform justify them in the eyes of men; and this is evident from the example of Abraham, for he asks, Was not Abraham justified by works, when he offered up his son? But the pious act of offering up Isaac took

place many years after God had accepted Abraham, and entered into covenant with him. This act, therefore, could not have been the ground of his justification in the sight of God; but it justified the sincerity of his profession, and showed that he was indeed a true believer. These apostles, therefore, do not differ, but essentially agree in their doctrine.

By an impartial consideration of all the schemes of justification which have been devised, there is none which gives due honour to the divine law, except that which represents the righteousness of Christ imputed and received by faith as the only ground of a sinner's pardon and acceptance. And, if God could have been just, and could have justified the sinner on any other ground, the whole Mediatorial work of Christ might have been dispensed with.

A common objection to this doctrine of gratuitous justification is, that it tends to negligence and licentiousness. This

objection is as old as the time of Paul, for he states it distinctly and answers it effectually. "Do we make void the law through faith, nay we establish the law." "Shall we continue in sin that grace may abound? God forbid! how shall we that are dead to sin live any longer therein?" The faith which justifies, works by love and purifies the heart, therefore, the justified person cannot be negligent of good works. And, if an appeal be made to facts, it will be found that those who maintain this doctrine are not deficient in obedience.

## CHAPTER XIII.

## REGENERATION AND CONVERSION.

THE necessity of a change of moral character in man arises from the fact, that by nature all men are "dead in trespasses and sins," and, therefore, if any of the human race are ever saved, they must be regenerated; for, even if a man could be justified and yet remain under the power of sin, he could not be happy, because sin contains in itself the seeds of misery, and such an one would certainly be incapable of participating in the joys of heaven, which require a holy nature to perceive or relish them. Therefore, our Lord said to Nicodemus, "except a man be born again he cannot see the kingdom of God."

It is not necessary to be very exact in distinguishing between regeneration and conversion, especially as the Scriptures appear to speak of both together. But, it may not be amiss to remark, that regeneration, which is the communication of spiritual life, is the act of God; conversion, which is a turning from sin to God, is an act, in consequence of the divine influence exerted on our minds.

That God is the author of regeneration is evident from Scripture, and from the nature of the case. The same power that “caused light to shine out of darkness must shine into our hearts, to give us the light of the knowledge of God.” “Who are born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.” And, as this work in the economy of salvation belongs to the Holy Spirit, it is said, “Except a man be born of water and the SPIRIT, he cannot see the kingdom of God.” That man cannot regenerate himself is too evident to need a re-



mark. Life, in all cases, is the gift of God. If spiritual life be extinct in man, none but the power of God is adequate to rekindle it. It would be as reasonable to suppose that the human body, when deprived of animal life, could restore itself to activity and animation, as that a soul dead in sin should be able to perform the acts which appertain to spiritual life.

It is said that we are "born again by the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever," and, that God, of his own will, "begets us again by the word of truth." But the word, in this case, must be considered as an instrument in the hands of the Spirit; it can have no saving efficacy without a divine energy accompanying it. But, how is the word a means of regeneration? To this two answers may be given, accordingly as we use the word regeneration in a stricter or wider sense. As the operation of God in the communication of life to the soul is an instan-

taneous act, there is no place for any instrumentality in producing the effect; and, as the word only produces a saving effect, when the heart is prepared by grace, the word is the means of regeneration only as God has connected the influences of the Spirit with the preaching and reading of the word. But, if we take the new birth in a wider sense, to include not merely the operation of God on the soul, but also the effects produced in the changed views, and feelings of the soul, then we can easily understand how the word is a means of giving knowledge to the mind, and of exciting those exercises and affections, in which the spiritual life essentially consists. The word, alone, can never generate a true faith; but, when the Spirit of God has operated on the blind mind, the glorious truths of the gospel begin to appear in their true light, and become the object of a saving faith. So, also, when the beauty of holiness is perceived by means

of the word, love is excited; and, when sin is viewed as exhibited in the word of God, as odious and abominable, true repentance is enkindled; and thus of every other exercise of the renewed nature. It may, therefore, be truly said, that in every act of the spiritual life, the word of truth is concerned; it presents the proper object and supplies the persuasive motive. Indeed, if the mind were in a state free from blindness and corruption, the mere objective presentation of the truth, without any supernatural influences, would bring into exercise all holy acts and affections.

In regeneration there is no new faculty created, understanding by the word faculty some constituent power of the soul; for, as by the fall man did not cease to be a moral agent, but retained all the faculties which belonged to him as man; so in regeneration, no new faculty is produced. The loss was not of any physical power, but of the moral excellence

in which man was created. The same soul may be in ignorance or filled with knowledge; actuated by holy desires and affections, or the contrary. The moral character is a kind of clothing of the soul, which may be essentially changed, while the essence of the soul, and its natural faculties remain unchanged.

Although Almighty power is exerted in the regeneration of a sinner, yet man is only conscious of the effects, as they appear in the exercises of the renewed mind. And as the end accomplished in this change is the partial restoration of the lost image of God, or "knowledge and true holiness," the evidences of regeneration are the same as the evidences of a holy nature. And as spiritual or holy exercises are specifically different from all others, there would be no difficulty in discerning the characteristics of piety in ourselves, were it not for the feebleness of these exercises and the sad mixture of feelings of an opposite nature.

The best way, therefore, to obtain a comfortable assurance, that we are regenerated is, to press on with assiduity and alacrity in the divine life. That which is obscure in itself will not become clear by poring over it ever so long; but, if we emerge from our darkness, and come forth into the light, we shall be able to discern clearly, what was before involved in obscurity. If we would know whether our faith and love and hope are genuine, we must seek to bring these graces into lively exercise, and then we cannot avoid perceiving their true character. But as faith is really the apprehension and reception of offered mercy, it is by directly believing in Christ, or actually rolling our burdens on him, that we experience peace and confidence. Where a good work is begun, it will be carried on. None but they who persevere to the end shall be saved. In concluding this article, we may adopt the language of the beloved disciple, "Behold what man-

ner of love the Father hath bestowed upon us, that we should be called the sons of God! Beloved, now are we the sons of God; and it doth not yet appear what we shall be; but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is."

## CHAPTER XIV.

REPENTANCE TOWARD GOD AND FAITH  
IN OUR LORD JESUS CHRIST.

PAUL gives “repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ,” as a summary of his preaching, during his two years’ ministry at Ephesus; and, as comprehending the whole counsel of God, and as including whatever was profitable to the people.

Repentance literally signifies a change of mind for the better; but in our Shorter Catechism it is defined to be, “A saving grace, whereby a sinner out of a true sense of his sin, and apprehension of the mercy of God in Christ, doth, with grief and hatred of his sin, turn from it unto God, with full purpose of and endeavour

after new obedience.” And in the same place, faith is defined to be, “A saving grace whereby we receive and rest upon him (Jesus Christ) for salvation as he is freely offered in the gospel.” Whatever difference of opinion there may be as to the precise meaning of these scriptural terms, all sound Christians will admit, that for popular and practical use, no language could be selected which would more perspicuously and properly convey to the reader a true notion of these fundamental graces. And, as to the precedence of one before the other, it is a question as impertinent, as whether a whole precedes one of its parts, or is preceded by it. No man can give a sound definition of evangelical repentance which will not include faith. But, if the word repentance be used in a more restricted sense, for godly sorrow for sin and hatred of it, it must be preceded by a true faith, for seeing in a rational mind goes before feeling. There must be a



perception of the holiness of the divine law, before the turpitude of sin can be so seen as to occasion grief and hatred on account of it. But, if by faith be meant that cordial reception of Christ, which is mentioned in the words cited from the catechism, then, certainly, there must be some true sense of sin; before we can appreciate Christ as a Saviour from sin. But, it is altogether wrong to perplex the minds of serious Christians with useless questions of this sort. Let the schoolmen discuss such matters to their heart's content, but let the humble Christian rest in the plain and obvious meaning of the words of Scripture. The effect of divine truth on the heart is produced by general views, and not by nice and accurate distinctions.

Both faith and repentance must be proved to be genuine by their fruits. "Faith works by love and purifies the heart." "Faith overcomes the world." James says, "show me thy faith with-

out thy works, and I will show thee my faith by my works." Repentance is itself a turning from sin unto God. It is the commencement of a reformation from all sin. John the Baptist, when he inculcated repentance, at the same time called upon the people "to bring forth fruits meet for repentance." Repentance is no atonement for sin; but it is indissolubly connected with the pardon of sin. Therefore it was said, "Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out."

## CHAPTER XV.

SANCTIFICATION ; OR, GROWTH IN  
GRACE.

IN regeneration spiritual life is communicated ; but this incipient principle is in its infancy when first implanted. The vigour of spiritual life seems to be analogous to natural life, very different in different subjects. But in all it is imperfect, and needs to be assiduously cherished and nurtured, that it may daily gain strength, and gradually rise to maturity. There are various means of divine appointment, conducive to this end, in the use of which growth is as certain as in the body, when supplied with nutriment. In the former, as well as in the latter, there may be seasons of decay,

arising from various untoward causes ; but, it may be assumed as a fact, that where the principle of piety is really radicated in the soul, there will be growth ; the steady tendency will be to a state of maturity. And, although perfection is never attained in this life, yet there is in all true Christians a sincere desire after it, and there may be a constant approximation toward it as long as they live. And such a state of piety may be attained, as, comparatively, may be termed a state of perfection, and is so termed in Scripture. From what has been said, it will be apparent, that sanctification does not differ specifically from regeneration ; the one is the commencement, the other the continuance and increase of the same principle.

Two things are commonly intended in the word sanctification. The first is, the mortification of sin ; the last, the increase of the vigour and constancy of the exercises of piety. But, although these

may be distinguished, yet there is no need to treat of them separately, because the advancement of the one cannot but be accompanied with progress in the other. Like the two scales of a balance, when one is depressed the other rises. Just so in the divine life in the soul, if pride is humbled, humility is of necessity increased; if the undue love of the creature is mortified, the love of God will be strengthened; and so of every other grace. Indeed, when we examine the subject accurately, we shall find, that all real mortification of sin is by the exercise of faith and those holy affections which flow from it. By legal striving, however earnest, or by ascetic discipline, however rigid, very little head way is made against the stream of inherent corruption. It is right, indeed, to keep the body under, lest its blind appetites and impulses should hinder the exercises of religion; and occasional fasting, when free from superstition, does greatly aid the spiritual pro-

gress of the true Christian; and this is especially the fact, when he is in conflict with some fleshly lust, or easily besetting sin. A pampered body will ever be an enemy to growth in grace.

It must not be forgotten, that we are as dependent on the Holy Spirit for every holy act and exercise, as for the ability to put forth the first act of faith, when regenerated. We have no strength in ourselves, in consequence of our justification and conversion. Christ has said, "Without me ye can do nothing." He is the vine, and believers are the branches. "As the branch cannot bear fruit except it abide in the vine, neither can ye except ye abide in me." Yet this does not take away or diminish our motives for exertion; so far from it, that it affords the only encouragement which we have for diligence in the use of means. For though the power is of God, that power is exerted through the means of divine appointment. Therefore in Scripture, divine aid

and human agency are constantly united. When Christians are exhorted "to work out their salvation," the reason assigned is, "for it is God that worketh in you both to will and to do, of his own good pleasure."

Where two opposite principles exist in the same person there must be a conflict. When the whole current of the affections runs toward the world, there being no opposing principle, no conflict is experienced, except that which arises from the remonstrances of conscience; or from the discordant craving of conflicting desires of a sinful kind. But, in the true believer, "the flesh lusteth against the spirit, and the spirit against the flesh; so that they cannot do the things that they would." And often the spiritual man is made to groan in agony, and to cry out, "O, wretched man that I am, who shall deliver me from this body of death?" Although, in this warfare, the principle of grace is generally victorious, for it is

written, "sin shall not have dominion over you;" yet, sometimes, by the power of temptation, and negligence in watchfulness, the man of God is cast down and degraded, and unless raised up by the hand of the Captain of his salvation, he would rise no more. But, as the work of grace was begun without any merit or cooperation of the believer, the same love which at first effectually called him away from his sins and from the world, still pursues him, and will not suffer the enemy ultimately to triumph over him. Satan shall never have the opportunity of boasting that he has accomplished the ruin of one whom God purposed to save, and to save whom Christ died, and who has been effectually called by the Holy Spirit. He may fall, but he shall rise again, for God hath said, "My grace is sufficient for thee," and "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." And not unfrequently, the very falls of the children of God are overruled for their more



rapid progress in future. Nothing more tends to humble the soul, and destroy self-confidence, than being overtaken by such faults.

The means of sanctification may be comprehended under two general heads, the word of God and prayer. The first is the food which is provided for the nourishment of the soul, and by which it lives. Christ himself is indeed the bread of life—the manna that came down from heaven; but it is only in the word, that we can find Christ: there he is revealed—there his dignity and glory are manifested—there we behold his holy life, his miracles, his sufferings, his death, resurrection, ascension, and intercession. The whole object of faith, and love, and hope, is found in the word of God. Therefore, it is by the assiduous study of the word, and meditation on its truths, that we are to expect an increase of faith, and a real growth in grace.

The other principal means of growth

is prayer; especially, prayer for the influences of the Holy Spirit. Without the Spirit, as we have seen, there can be no progress; but this sum of blessings is graciously promised in answer to prayer. And these two means are harmonious; for the word is the "sword of the Spirit." The Spirit operates only by the word. Therefore, though we read that sanctification is of the Spirit, we also read that effectual prayer of Jesus Christ, "Sanctify them through thy truth, thy word is truth."

Although all the means of sanctification may be comprehended under the word of God and prayer, yet there are many subordinate means, which have a powerful efficacy in giving application and force to these means. In this light may be considered the ministry, the reading of good books, attendance on the sacraments, and fasting. But there is one means of grace of this class which

we are not required to resort to, which is often employed by our heavenly Father, with great effect in promoting the sanctification of his children, I mean the chastisements of his rod. The benefit of affliction is often celebrated in Scripture; and almost every child of God can, after a few years' experience, adopt the language of the royal Psalmist, and say, "It was good for me that I was afflicted." And Paul testifies, "That though no chastisement for the present is joyous but grievous, yet afterwards it worketh the peaceable fruits of righteousness in them who are exercised thereby." Afflictions are often used as the means of recovering the children of God from a state of backsliding; as says David, "Before I was afflicted, I went astray, but now I keep thy testimonies."

Though Christians do not arrive at sinless perfection in this life, yet it is a state to which every humble child

of God shall attain at death. Christ will present his whole body before his Father's throne, "without spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing." "We shall be like him, for we shall see him as he is."

## CHAPTER XVI.

## GOOD WORKS; OR, CHRISTIAN DUTIES.

“TRUTH is in order to goodness;” and the great touchstone of truth, is its tendency to promote holiness, according to the Saviour’s rule: “By their fruits shall ye know them.”

Good works are such as the law of God requires to be performed by all persons, according to the relations in which they stand, and the positive precepts which he has enjoined, and which are in force at the time. They have been commonly divided into three classes, the duties which we owe to God, to our neighbour, and to ourselves; but in strict propriety

of speech, all our duties, whoever may be the object, are due to God. He is our Lawgiver, and we are under the moral government of no other.

Though Christ fulfilled the preceptive part of the law in the room of God's chosen people, yet he did not thereby free them from the obligation of obedience to the moral law. Such a release from moral obligation is inconceivable; for it is impossible that a creature should not be under obligations to love and honour his Creator; but if such exemption from law were possible, it would be no blessing but a curse; for our happiness consists in conformity to the law of God. "In keeping thy commandments, there is a great reward."

As the obligation to obedience cannot be removed, so neither can the requisitions of the law, as some suppose, be lowered. Man must ever be as much bound to love God with the whole heart, as to love him at all. If man had fulfilled the con-

dition of the first covenant, which required perfect obedience during his probation, he would not have been free from moral obligation to obedience in consequence of his justification. Angels, who are supposed to be now confirmed in happiness, are as much under obligation to love God as ever. Indeed, as has been hinted, holiness and happiness are inseparable. The Holy Scriptures abound in exhortations to Christians to be diligent, zealous, and persevering in the performance of the respective duties of their stations; and in the performance, divine aid may be asked and confidently expected.

Some duties are incumbent on all classes of people; such as the worship of God, doing good to men, and abstaining from every thing which would have a tendency to dishonour Christ, to injure our neighbour, or hinder our own usefulness and improvement. Two things especially are incumbent on all in relation to their

fellow-creatures residing on the earth with them. The first is the communication of saving knowledge to such as are so unfortunate as to be destitute of this precious treasure. This is a duty of universal obligation, though the means proper to be used by different persons will vary according to the variety of the circumstances in which they are placed. It is the duty of all Christians to “let their conversation be always with grace, seasoned with salt, that it may minister grace to the hearers.” It is also made their duty to exhort and admonish one another, and that daily, lest any be hardened through the deceitfulness of sin. All Christians are bound also to teach by example as well as by precept, by exhibiting to the view of all who see them a holy life. “Let,” says Paul, “your conversation be such as becometh the gospel.” And our blessed Lord in his sermon on the mount, commands: “Let your light so shine that others seeing your good



works may glorify your Father who is in heaven." It is evident from the very nature of this duty which arises from our obligation to love our neighbour as ourselves, that all Christians are bound to send the gospel to those who are destitute of this necessary means of salvation; for, "how can they hear without a preacher, and how can they preach except they be sent?" All, therefore, according to their ability, should contribute toward this object by supporting missionaries, aiding in the printing and circulation of Bibles and evangelical tracts, and institutions of learning for the training of ministers. But this duty of diffusing abroad the precious seed of divine truth, devolves especially on those who have been called to the holy ministry, who have been ordained for this very purpose, to publish to every creature the gospel of the grace of God. When a dispensation of the gospel is committed to any one, he will incur a fearful load of guilt if he turn

aside to any secular employment. This may be learned from many things left on record by the apostle Paul. He calls God to witness that he was free from the blood of all men at Ephesus, because he had not ceased to declare unto them repentance toward God and faith in our Lord Jesus Christ ; evidently intimating that if he had not been thus faithful and diligent, he would have incurred the guilt of their destruction ; which is exactly in accordance with what is said respecting the unfaithful watchman in Ezekiel. The duty of preaching, to those who are called and have undertaken the office is not optional, which is evident from what Paul says in another place, “ Wo is me, if I preach not the gospel.”

Others, who have the instruction of youth committed to them, are under peculiar obligations to instil into their opening minds the doctrines of God’s holy word. Parents, guardians of orphans, and teachers of schools of every

kind, are bound by this obligation, from which no human laws can exempt them.

Another duty of universal obligation is to pray to God for his blessing on all the nations of the earth; and especially on kings and all that are in authority, not only that they may obtain salvation, but that Christians, under a wise and equitable administration of law, “may lead quiet and peaceable lives in all godliness and honesty.” All are bound to join cordially and fervently in the public prayers of the church, and not to neglect the assembling themselves together, as the manner of some is. We have encouragement also to agree together, in smaller associations for prayer; and are assured that Christ will be present in such meetings, and that the concordant prayers there offered will be graciously answered. And who can doubt, that, as we are commanded “to pray without ceasing,” and “to pray every where, holding up holy hands,” family prayer

is an incumbent duty? But in addition to all these, “we should enter into our closets, and shut the door, and pray to our Father in secret; and our Father who seeth in secret will reward us openly.”

Among the prescribed duties of Christians, there is none which is more solemnly and emphatically inculcated than a compassionate regard to the poor and afflicted. Indeed, the phrase “good works,” is most commonly employed in Scripture, in relation to this single thing. In this we follow the example of Christ, “who went about doing good,” by preaching the gospel to the poor, and by relieving the distresses of the afflicted. And it is the assiduous performance of this duty which recommends the gospel to the judgment and conscience of men, more than any thing else. “Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father, is to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep himself un-

spotted from the world." Nothing more is necessary to convince us of the importance of this duty, than the representation given by our Saviour of the process of the judgment, recorded in Matt. xxv., where the destiny of the assembled race of men is made to turn upon the kindness shown to the disciples of Christ. "Then shall the King say unto them on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me." And, in answer to their inquiry, when they had done any of these things to him, he said, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me." And to the wicked the

neglect of this duty is alone mentioned as the ground of condemnation.

Among the good works which Christians are required to perform, relative duties hold a very conspicuous place. These, indeed, in number, greatly exceed all other Christian duties, and no day passes in which every one has not duties of this kind to perform. But, as the relations of men are very much diversified by their condition in life, and standing in society, these duties are not the same to all persons. One is a parent, another a child; one is a magistrate, another a citizen; one is a pastor, another a member of his flock; one is a master, another a servant; one is a husband, another a wife. Besides these, there are particular professions and occupations in life; or offices in the church, or state, all which relations give rise to duties, which are incumbent on all who sustain these various relations. It behoves the Christian to be conscientious and faithful in the discharge of all

relative duties. And, as there is a necessity for intercourse and commerce among men, the virtues of justice and veracity, should be constantly practised, "doing unto others as we would have them do unto us." And, in social intercourse, to promote good fellowship, there should be real kindness, respectfulness, candour, and courtesy assiduously cultivated. The standing rule should be, to do nothing and say nothing which would tend to the injury of our neighbour; but continually to seek to promote his best interests.

## CHAPTER XVII.

## THE SACRAMENTS.

SACRAMENTS are visible signs of invisible grace. They are also seals of God's covenant with men. Just as in more solemn transactions among men, besides the words in which the substance of the compact, or treaty, or deed of conveyance, is contained, it has been customary from the earliest times, to have certain signs superadded, to give solemnity to the transaction, and to deepen the impression of the obligations or stipulations into which the parties had entered. And, frequently, such actions were performed as symbolically represented the consequences which would ensue from a violation of



the contract, or a neglect of the duty promised. Thus, it was customary, not only in treaties between nations, but in the more important transactions among individuals, to have seals appended to bonds and contracts. So of joining right hands and other ceremonies in marriage, and wearing ribands or stars, as a sign of some military order. We learn from Scripture, that it was customary, anciently, in forming solemn covenants, to divide slaughtered animals, and to cause the parties to pass between the dissected parts, by which it would seem an imprecation was implied, that if either of the contracting parties should prove unfaithful, he might, in like manner, be cut to pieces. In accommodation to the nature and customs of men, God has, under every dispensation, appointed certain external rites, which have no signification, but in connexion with the covenant to which they are appended. For these signs, or symbolical actions, are never

found but in connexion with solemn covenants, which they are intended to confirm, or render the ratification more solemn and impressive.

Another frequent use of institutions of this kind is, to serve as memorials of events and transactions, which it was important should not be forgotten. Many such we have in the Old Testament.

But as there is a resemblance, readily conceived, between certain objects or actions, and certain truths, which is the foundation of figurative language; so this resemblance is the principle on which particular signs are adopted. Every body, even a child, can see that washing the body, or a part of it, with pure water, fitly represents the moral purification of the soul. And, as truth is gradually received, while some important things are future, it has pleased God to furnish a kind of faint prefiguration of such events, which would serve to give some vague idea of the matter. Thus, by the presentment

of animals of certain species before the altar, and then by the offerer confessing his sins over its head, before it was slain, and then by the sprinkling of blood by the priest, the vicarious atonement for sin was prefigured for ages before the real efficacious sacrifice was offered. And by this ceremony, kept up daily before the eyes of the people, they were taught typically to look for redemption by the shedding of blood, and to obtain pardon by having their sins transferred to another, who would bear them away. Under the new dispensation there was less occasion for these ritual services; and, therefore, while the old ceremonial law was abolished, no new sacraments were instituted, except baptism and the Lord's Supper.

According to the universal testimony of Jewish writers, baptism was practised by them, on the admission of proselytes, long before the advent of Jesus Christ. And, though circumcision was restricted to males, this ceremony was extended also

to females, and, like circumcision, was administered to infants.

When John, the harbinger of Messiah, was sent of God, he commenced his ministry by preaching repentance and baptism for the remission of sins. The object of his mission was "to prepare the way of the Lord," by arousing the attention of the people, and bringing about a reformation in the nation. His baptism was a national baptism. It was the duty of all the people to repent and submit to this rite, which they generally did; the pharisees and lawyers, however, rejected the counsel of God, not being baptized of John.

The disciples of Christ also, by his direction, administered baptism to such as acknowledged him to be the Messiah. But baptism as a rite of the Christian church, was not in existence until the new dispensation commenced, which was not until after Christ's resurrection. Then a new commission was given to the

apostles, “to go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.” This was properly the institution of Christian baptism; and differed from the rite as formerly administered in two respects: first, in being in the name of the adorable Trinity, and, secondly, in being made a badge of discipleship in the Christian church, or a formal initiation into the visible church of Christ. “Baptism is not to be administered to any that are out of the visible church until they profess their faith in Christ and obedience to him; but the children of such as are members of the visible church are to be baptized.”

## CHAPTER XVIII.

## BAPTISM.

THERE has always been a tendency to make too much of these external rites, and to depend unduly upon them, as a ground on which to hope for salvation. Thus, the Jews so exalted the importance of the rite of circumcision, that they seem to have thought that being descended from Abraham, and having the sign in their flesh, insured their salvation: which false confidence Christ and his Apostles laboured to overthrow. It is not wonderful, therefore, that the same error should arise in regard to baptism. In the New Testament baptism is both a duty and a privilege; but no undue im-

portance is given to it, nor any undue efficacy ascribed to it. Paul, indeed, spent little of his time in administering this rite. He avoided it at Corinth, where there were divisions and factions, lest any should say that he baptized in his own name. And he says expressly that Christ sent him not to baptize but to preach the gospel; which single declaration is a refutation of the opinion that internal grace, or regeneration, always accompanies baptism; for in that case baptism was far more important than preaching. For Paul could not certainly convey grace by preaching; but if he could have regenerated all to whom he administered baptism, he should have given himself up expressly to this work. These sacramental institutions are not intended to be the means of conveying grace to the subjects, in some mysterious manner, but they are intended to operate on adults by the word of truth, which accompanies the ordinance.

Some lay a great stress on the mode in which baptism is administered, insisting that a total immersion of the body in water is essential to the right administration. In the ceremonies of a sacrament, some things belong to its essence, because they represent symbolically the truth intended to be impressed on the mind; other things are indifferent, because they are merely incidental, and do not affect the import of the sacrament. If it could be proved that the act of immersion was the thing in the ceremony which is principally significant of the truth intended to be inculcated, it would be essential; but if the mode of applying water has nothing to do with the emblematical instruction of the ordinance, it is an indifferent circumstance; as much so, as whether baptism be administered in a vessel or in a river; or whether in the Lord's Supper, leavened or unleavened bread be used, or whether we recline or sit upright. And in regard to indifferent, incidental circum-



stances, which do not enter into the essence of the sacrament, there is no obligation to follow what all know was the practice of Christ and the Apostles; as we know that in the first institution of the sacred supper they reclined on couches, used unleavened bread, and partook of it in the evening, but we do not feel bound to imitate any of these things.

The baptism of the children of those who themselves were in covenant with God, though not expressly mentioned in Scripture, is a practice supported by good and sufficient reasons. It cannot be supposed that under the gospel dispensation, the privileges of the offspring of believers are less than under the Jewish. But we know that by God's command, circumcision, the sign of the covenant, was administered to all the males. They were thus brought externally within the bonds of the covenant; and although the external rite of initiation has been changed, there is no intimation given that the children

of believers were to be henceforth excluded from the visible church.

Christ was displeased with his disciples for hindering little children to come unto him, "for," said he "of such is the kingdom of heaven. And he took them in his arms and blessed them."

Household baptism was practised by the Apostles, and children form a part of most households.

Infants are depraved and need the washing of regeneration, and are capable of being regenerated; and this renovation baptism does strikingly represent. The practice may be traced up to the earliest period of the church, and was then universal in all parts of the world.

## CHAPTER XIX.

## THE LORD'S SUPPER.

WHEN Christ celebrated the passover for the last time with his disciples, at the close of the feast, he instituted another sacrament, bearing a strong analogy to this Jewish festival, to be perpetually observed in his church until he should come again. While they were reclining around the table, he took of the bread which remained, and blessed it, and brake it, and gave it to his disciples, saying, "This is my body which is broken for you, this do in remembrance of me. Likewise also the cup, after supper, saying, This cup is the new testament in my blood, which is shed for you." As this or-

dinance was intended to be social, that is, to be celebrated by the church when assembled, Paul calls it a communion; "The cup of blessing which we bless, is it not the communion of the blood of Christ? The bread which we break, is it not the communion of the body of Christ?"

Nothing can be plainer than the nature of the duty enjoined upon the disciples, and intended to be obligatory on all Christians to the end of the world; for the apostle Paul, who was not present at the institution of the eucharist, but received it, as he did the gospel, by immediate revelation, when he recites the words of institution, adds an important clause, "For as often as ye eat this bread and drink this cup, ye do show forth the Lord's death till he come." From which it is evident that it was intended to be a standing memorial of the death of Christ until his second advent.

When Christ says, "this is my body," to suppose that he meant to teach, that

the piece of bread which he held in his hand, was literally his material body, is an opinion so monstrous, and involving so many contradictions, that it never could have originated but in a dark and superstitious age. In the first place it was contradicted by all the senses, for the properties of bread and wine remained after the words were spoken. In all other cases of miracles, the appeal is to the senses: no example can be adduced of men being required to believe any thing contrary to the testimony of their senses. But if the bread which Christ held in his hand was literally his body, he must have had two bodies; and if he partook of the bread, he must have eaten his own body. He says, "This is my body, which is broken for you." "This is my blood, which is shed for you:" if these words are taken literally, then Christ was already slain, and his blood already shed; he was, therefore, crucified before he was nailed to the cross.

Moreover, if the bread is transubstantiated every time this sacrament is celebrated, Christ must have as many bodies as there are officiating priests: and while his body is glorified in heaven, it is offered as a sacrifice on earth, in thousands of different places. And while the glorified body in heaven is no longer composed of flesh and blood, the body made out of the bread and wine, is a real body of flesh, containing blood, as when he tabernacled among men. And if the thing were possible, what spiritual benefit could be derived, from devouring flesh? From its nature, being material, it could not nourish the spiritual life. And when received into the stomach as food, what becomes of it? is it incorporated, like common food, into our bodies?—But I will not pursue the subject further. Before a man can believe in transubstantiation, he must take leave both of his reason and his senses.

The withholding the cup from the laity

is an open violation of our Lord's command, and a manifest mutilation of the ordinance; and the pretence for this presumptuous departure from the express command of Christ is both superstitious and impious; for it implies that Christ in the institution of the cup, was wanting in wisdom, or that he was regardless of the danger of having his blood desecrated, by being spilt.

As the Lord's Supper is a memorial of the death of Christ, it should be celebrated often, that this great sacrifice, on which our salvation depends, may not be forgotten, but kept in lively remembrance in the Christian church.

If it be inquired, in what sense is Christ present in the eucharist? we answer, spiritually to those who by faith apprehend and receive him. The idea of a bodily presence in, with, or under the bread and wine, is little less absurd than the doctrine of transubstantiation. Indeed, in some respects, it is even more impossible,

for it requires and supposes the ubiquity of Christ's body. The truth then is, that only they who exercise faith in Christ, as exhibited in the eucharist, eat his flesh and drink his blood. A participation of the instituted signs, without faith to discern the Lord's body, is so far from being beneficial, that it involves the guilt of an awful crime; for he that eateth and drinketh unworthily, eateth and drinketh judgment unto himself. He is guilty of the body and blood of the Lord. "Let a man examine himself, therefore, and so let him eat of this bread and drink of this cup."

To make a matter of importance of mere indifferent circumstances in the celebration of the sacraments, has been the cause of useless and hurtful contentions; and to insist on any thing as necessary to a sacrament, which Christ has not expressly enjoined, is a wicked usurpation of his authority, by adding human inventions to his divine ordinances.



The value of the Lord's Supper is incalculable. It is admirably adapted to our nature. It is simple, and its meaning easily apprehended by the weakest minds. It is strongly significant and impressive. It has been called an epitome of the whole gospel, as the central truths of the system, in which all the rest are implied, are here clearly exhibited. And it ever has been signally blessed to the spiritual edification and comfort of the children of God. They, therefore, who neglect this ordinance, do at the same time, disobey a positive command of Christ, and deprive themselves of one of the richest privileges which can be enjoyed on this side of heaven.

## CHAPTER XX.

## DEATH.

ALL the doctrines and duties of religion have relation to a future state. All religion is founded on the supposition that man will live after the death of the body. The importance of any doctrine, or religious institution, depends very much on its bearing on the future destinies of men. Religion, therefore, teaches its votaries to be much occupied with the contemplation of the unseen world. It is especially the province of faith to fix the attention of the mind on these awful but invisible realities, and by this means to draw off the too eager affections from the objects of the present world. Of whatever else men may doubt, they cannot be sceptical

in regard to death. The evidences of the certainty of this event to all, are so multiplied, and so frequently obtruded on our attention, that all know that it is appointed for them once to die; and yet, notwithstanding this certainty, and the frequent mementos which we have, most men are but slightly impressed with their mortality, until death actually comes near, and eternity, with its awful realities, begins to open before them.

Death is, according to Scripture, "the wages of sin." By sin death entered into the world. The death of the body is a part of the punishment of sin; except in the case of the believer, who is freed from the condemnation of the law; and to whom death, though frightful and painful, is no curse, but rather a blessing. For, by the death of Christ, as his Surety, the penalty of the law has been exhausted. "There is no condemnation to them who are in Christ Jesus." To them "it is a gain to die." To them, the monster has

no sting. To them, death is a deliverance from sin and suffering, and an entrance into perfect holiness and happiness. As soon as the true Christian departs, he is with Christ, and is like him, and beholds his glory. Therefore, Paul in his inventory of the rich possessions of the saints, reckons death as one, "For all things are yours, whether Paul or Apollos, or Cephas, or things present, or things to come, life or *death*, all are yours, and you are Christ's, and Christ is God's."

All we know of death is, that it is a separation of the soul from the body; the consequence of which to the latter is, an immediate disorganization and corruption. As it was taken from the dust, so it returns to dust again. But as to the soul, being essentially living and active, it continues its conscious exercises, but in what way, when deprived of its usual organ, we cannot tell. As all our experience has been in connexion with bodily

organs, we of course can know nothing of the exercises of mind in a state where no such organs are possessed. All attempts, therefore, to imagine what the condition of the soul in a separate state is, must be vain.

But we need not be perplexed or troubled on account of our ignorance of the future state. We may well trust, in this case, as in others, our divine Redeemer and faithful Friend, to arrange all matters for his own glory, and for our benefit. The gracious declaration, that "all things work together for good to them who love God, and are the called according to his purpose," is not only true, in relation to their pilgrimage on earth, but also in regard to their passage through the valley of the shadow of death; so that they need fear no evil, for the great Shepherd has promised to be with them, and to comfort them, with his rod and his staff; "When heart and flesh fail, he will be the strength of their heart, and their por-

tion for ever.” “Precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints.”

Although little is revealed respecting the mode of existence and enjoyment in a separate state, for the plain reason, that no description could be understood by us; yet we may confidently trust our blessed Redeemer to provide for the guidance and comfort of the soul, when it enters an unknown world. When Lazarus died, angels stood ready to receive and convoy his departing spirit; and we have no reason to think that this favour was peculiar to this saint; but rather that it was recorded in this instance, to teach us, that the same might be expected in every case of the death of a true believer.

## CHAPTER XXI.

## RESURRECTION.

LEAVING, therefore, the intermediate state between death and judgment, in that obscurity in which revelation has left it, let us proceed, briefly to contemplate those important events connected with our future existence, concerning which the Scriptures speak plainly; I mean the resurrection and judgment. The redemption purchased by the merit and death of Christ, respects the body as well as the soul. The redemption of the body is one of those things for which believers wait in hope. Although the threatening, that unto dust it shall return, will be verified; yet, the body itself shall rise again. Christ is

“the resurrection and the life.” “For,” said Christ to the Jews, “the hour is coming in the which all that are in the graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth; they that have done good, to the resurrection of life; and they that have done evil, to the resurrection of damnation.” “Since by man came death, by man also came the resurrection of the dead; for, as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive.” “Knowing that he which raised up the Lord Jesus, shall raise us up also by Jesus.”

When it is asserted, that all must die, and be raised again, they must be excepted who shall be alive upon the earth when Christ shall come; for, “behold,” says Paul, “I show you a mystery, we shall not all sleep, but we shall all be changed, in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump.” “For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven, with a shout and with the voice of the



archangel, and with the trump of God, and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air; and so shall we ever be with the Lord."

As to the difficulties which reason may suggest in regard to the resurrection of the same body, we need give ourselves no trouble. Let us believe, that "with God all things are possible, and that what he hath promised he is able to perform." "Why," says Paul, in his speech before Agrippa, "why should it be thought a thing incredible with you, that God should raise the dead?"

## CHAPTER XXII.

## JUDGMENT.

IMMEDIATELY after the resurrection comes the judgment of men and devils. The time of this event is called, the "LAST DAY," and the "DAY OF JUDGMENT," (2 Pet. iii. 7.)

"For he hath appointed a day in which he will judge the world in righteousness, by that Man whom he hath ordained." "But, as it is appointed unto men once to die, but after this the judgment." "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every one may receive the things done in his body, according to that he hath done, whether it be good or bad." "I charge thee, therefore, before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who shall judge the quick and the dead, at his ap-

pearing and kingdom.” “And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in chains under darkness unto the judgment of the great day.” “For God shall bring every work into judgment, with every secret thing, whether it be good, or whether it be evil.”

The end of appointing a day of judgment is, that the justice of God may be manifested, in his treatment of his creatures, and that the righteous may be vindicated from all those calumnies which, in this world, were heaped upon them. When the conduct of the wicked shall be disclosed, and all their secret motives and purposes brought to light, it will be manifest to the whole universe, that their condemnation is just, and especially, when it is seen, that punishment is exactly proportioned to the guilt of the offender. But the degree of guilt will not be measured by the enormity of the outward act alone; but the light and

privileges enjoyed by some, will give such crimson colour to their crimes, that their punishment will be greater than that of much more atrocious sinners, who lived in ignorance of the truths of God, according to the wo pronounced by our Saviour, against Chorazin, Bethsaida, and Capernaum, when he says, that it will be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon in the day of judgment, than for the first two cities, and more tolerable for Sodom than for the last.

Every one must perceive the fitness of appointing Christ to be the judge, since all power in heaven and earth is committed unto him, and he is made head over all things to his church. And as he was arraigned at a human tribunal and unjustly condemned, it is suitable that his enemies should behold him on the throne of his glory. It is on many accounts suitable that they who pierced him should see him coming in the clouds of heaven; and that all those who conspired his

death, and who with wicked hands crucified the Prince of life, should be brought to answer for their atrocious crimes at the tribunal of him whom they maliciously accused, unjustly condemned, and cruelly put to death. Another reason why God manifest in the flesh should be constituted judge of quick and dead, is, that he can appear visibly in his proper person, which the Father cannot. And as his disciples can only be pronounced acquitted on account of his perfect righteousness, it is altogether suitable that he should be on the judgment-seat to acknowledge them. Their conduct will, also, be exhibited, not as answering the demands of the law, but as evidence of their sincere faith in his name; and also, because the reward bestowed on them will be measured by their good works. Whether their secret sins will on that day be brought to light, has been disputed; but, as the glory of the Redeemer will be enhanced in proportion to the guilt

and misery of the redeemed, there is no solid reason why the sins of believers should be kept secret, especially as many of their sins must be known even to the wicked. Those texts which speak of the sins of God's people as blotted out, as buried in the sea, as covered, &c., do all relate to the pardon of sin ; but not to its concealment at the day of judgment.

## CHAPTER XXIII.

## HEAVEN; OR, THE STATE OF GLORIFICATION.

SOME things are hard to be believed, they are so good and glorious. That such poor, ignorant, imperfect, and unworthy creatures, should ever arrive at a state, in which they shall “know as they are known,” and shall be free from all imperfection in their moral exercises, and shall be continually as happy as they are capable of being, is hard for us in our present state distinctly to conceive of; and therefore the glorious realities of another world make, commonly, but a feeble impression on the minds of Christians. Perhaps a more deep and vivid impres-

sion of the nearness and glory of the heavenly state would so absorb their minds as to render them unfit to perform the common business of this life. It is, however, exceedingly desirable, that the children of God should think more of the heavenly state, and have a more habitual impression of the felicity and purity of the celestial world, than they commonly possess. In this brief summary, our object shall be, in the simplest manner, to exhibit, without exaggeration or amplification, what is revealed in the sacred Scriptures respecting the condition of the righteous after the judgment is brought to a close. And may the Spirit of God enlighten our blind minds to perceive the reality, felicity, and glory of the heavenly state.

The righteous, at the day of judgment, will be openly acknowledged and acquitted; and shall receive from the Judge a gracious welcome into his king-



dom and glory ; for then shall the King say to those on his right hand, “ Come ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.” Their minds will, no doubt, be wonderfully enlarged ; and it is no extravagant idea, and altogether consistent with analogy, to suppose, that we have now in our mental constitution, the germs of faculties which have never been developed in this world, because here their exercise was not needed ; but which, upon our transition into the celestial world, will be brought into full activity, and will qualify us to participate in the social intercourse, and in the employments of the heavenly state. There, the glorious attributes of God will be clearly exhibited to the understanding. There, the whole current of the affections will be concentrated on Christ, through whom the Father manifests himself. There, every desire, every volition, every thought, will

be in conformity with the divine will. Nothing will be wanting to that perfection of sublime and pure enjoyment, of which each individual is capable ; for although the happiness of every one will be complete, yet there will be many degrees, as some will have larger capacities than others ; as many vessels of different dimensions, cast into the sea, will all be full, yet their contents may be vastly different.

As all rational happiness is founded in knowledge of objects suited to satisfy and fill the rational mind, it is reasonable to think, that in heaven there will be a gradual progress in knowledge ; and as the object, even the divine attributes, is infinite, this progress may, indeed must, go on progressively through eternity. And hence we can understand why it is that the joys of heaven admit of no alloy from their long continuance, or constant repetition. New and interesting dis-

coveries of celestial objects, will furnish continual novelty and variety to entertain the taste of the rational mind.

The exercise of the social affections will be a source of pure and unspeakable felicity. There, no envious, narrow, or selfish feelings will exist, to interrupt the sweet communion of kindred spirits. The unity and harmony of spirit in the continual praise of God, will be a source of the most pure and elevated enjoyment, far above what tongue can express or heart conceive. There, indeed, all believers will be melted down, as it were, into one, and will constitute one glorious body; Christ being the Head.

The bodies of the saints will be exactly suited to the celestial world, and its delights and employments. These bodies of flesh and blood, created from the dust, will, at the resurrection, be so changed, that they will be fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body, which undoubted-

ly, is the most glorious visible object in the universe. It would be vain and presumptuous for us to imagine what will be the structure, the organs, and the habiliments of the glorified bodies of the saints. The nearest approximation which we can make to a conception of this matter, will consist merely in removing from our minds all those weaknesses and imperfections which cleave to these earthly bodies. Paul has, with the pen of inspiration, written nothing more sublime, than in his discourse respecting the resurrection of the bodies of the saints: "It is sown in corruption, it is raised in incorruption; it is sown in weakness, it is raised in power; it is sown a natural body, it is raised a spiritual body:" that is, a body purified and consecrated by the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, which is the true meaning of the word used in the original. Further on, the Apostle writes, "So when this corruptible shall have put on incor-

ruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, then shall be brought to pass the saying that is written, death is swallowed up in victory." In heaven there is no sickness, no tears, no death, no sin, no weariness, no alloy, no sleep, no fear; but everlasting joy and glory shall crown the heads of the redeemed.

## CHAPTER XXIV.

HELL; OR, THE STATE OF FUTURE  
MISERY.

THE most incomprehensible of all mysteries is, that moral evil should have a place in the universe of an infinitely wise, holy, and powerful God. We could construct a very plausible argument, *a priori*, to prove from the above premises, that moral evil never could be permitted to exist in the world. But how futile are all reasonings against facts experienced every moment, and by every man. The philosopher who undertook to demonstrate that there could be no such thing as motion, received the right answer, when the person addressed uttered not a word, but rose up

and walked. So we may answer all arguments against the possibility of the existence of evil, by pointing to the prison, the hospital, and the grave. We need not go so far; we need only refer the sophist to his own experience. Now, if moral evil have an existence, it is evident that pain or natural evil must follow it. No conviction of the human mind is clearer or stronger than that crime should be visited by punishment. Every judgment of the moral faculty, every feeling of disapprobation at unprovoked injury, every twinge of remorse, furnishes indubitable proof that moral evil should be visited with punishment. From this law, written on the heart, no man can escape. "The wages of sin is death:" and the very practice of moral evil involves misery in the very exercise.

But some who cannot but admit that moral evil exists, and that as long as it does exist, there must be misery; yet

cannot be reconciled to the doctrine of eternal misery, which seems to be clearly taught in the word of God. That any of God's rational creatures should be doomed to a state of everlasting sin and misery, is indeed an appalling idea; from which the benevolent sympathetic mind would gladly shrink; but as far as reason is concerned, the chief difficulty is admitted, when it is conceded, that sin and misery have an actual existence in the world, and have had from a period near its commencement. For if evil may exist, as it has done, consistently with the Divine attributes, it may exist hereafter—it may exist for ever. When it is argued that sin cannot deserve such a punishment, something is assumed which cannot be known to be true. If sin may exist and be punished for ages, no man can prove that it may not exist for ever, and for ever be the cause of misery. The idea is indeed so painful to our feelings, that unless the will of



God had been revealed too clearly to be mistaken, the doctrine of eternal misery would never have been received by any considerable number of persons; but revolting as it is to our sensibilities, it has been from the beginning, the belief of the whole Christian church, with a very few exceptions. We believe this doctrine, simply because we find it plainly written in innumerable passages of Scripture. If there is any art by which this array of testimony can be set aside, then it will be a legitimate inference, that no doctrine is or can be proved from the sacred word.

It is not intended to adduce all the Scripture proofs of this awful doctrine. They may be met with on almost every page of the New Testament. It may not be amiss, however, to cite a few passages, that the reader may have a specimen of the proof texts which may be alleged. There is a sin for which there is no forgiveness, neither in this world nor in the

world to come. There was a person, concerning whom our Saviour said, it had been better for him if he had never been born; which can only be true on the supposition, that punishment will be eternal. There were some of whom Christ said, "ye shall die in your sins, and where I am thither ye cannot come." It is said, that many "shall seek to enter into life and shall not be able." Besides, we have not the least intimation that the lost can ever be rendered meet for the heavenly state. Certainly the society and blasphemy of devils have no tendency to fit the souls of the damned for the pure joys of the celestial world. And, in confirmation of the common doctrine, we have in Scripture every form of expression which could express eternity of misery. The same terms which are employed to teach the eternal existence of God, and the perpetuity of the happiness of the righteous, are also used to teach the endless sufferings of the finally im-

penitent. And, for aught we know, eternity is an immutable state of existence; and he who is doomed to punishment in another world, must suffer eternally, because the successions of time may have no existence there.

We are not more certainly assured of the perpetuity of future misery, than of the intensity of the torments which must be endured by the wretched creatures who shall be doomed to everlasting banishment from the comfortable presence of God. Whether the fire of hell is a material fire is an inquiry of no importance. It matters not whether excruciating pain proceeds from a material or immaterial cause. The misery of lost sinners must be inconceivably dreadful if they should be abandoned to their own feelings of remorse, despair, and the raging of malignant passions, now free from all restraint. This state of misery is spoken of as a place of outer darkness; a lake of fire and brimstone; and a place

where the worm dieth not, and where the fire is not quenched. Let every one who is within the reach of mercy, flee from the coming wrath, and take refuge under the outstretched wings of the **DIVINE MERCY.**

**THE END.**

















